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LIFE

OF

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THE

LIFE

OF

HENRY ST. JOHN,

VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE,

SECRETARY OF STATE IN THE REIGN
OF QUEEN ANNE.

THE PEOPLE'S PALACE
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BY

THOMAS MACKNIGHT,

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF EDMUND BURKE," ETC. ETC.

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PREFACE.

THE lives of Lord Bolingbroke and Edmund Burke illustrate each other. They may be said to embrace the whole political history of the eighteenth century; and from the very different characters of the two men, the very different principles they announced, and the very different causes they advocated, form a curious contrast, and a most instructive study. The biography of the one statesman may rightly be considered a companion to the biography of the other.

A Life of Bolingbroke, presenting in one continuous view all the vicissitudes of his ambitious and chequered life, has long been a favourite design of the author. Without wishing to depreciate what has been written by others, he can ask no greater favour than that his volume may be fairly compared with anything which has as yet appeared professing to contain a delineation of Lord Bolingbroke's career. The narrative, as will

easily be seen, has not been based on any former work. It will be found to differ materially from every other publication of the kind in the estimate of Bolingbroke himself, in the representation of the most important facts of his life and the motives of his actions, as well as in the view of his contemporaries in relation to himself.

Beginning, as the author does, with a political narrative almost from the very year in which the great historical work of Lord Macaulay abruptly terminates, it was necessary to make some observations on the characters of the different persons who figured most prominently on the political scene when the young St. John first entered public life. While tracing his earlier career in the House of Commons, as Secretary-at-War, and during the two years of his retirement, it has been sought to exhibit clearly the nature of his connection with the Duke of Marlborough, which in some degree gave a colour to the whole of Bolingbroke's future career, and which has been far too little understood. Again, his obligations to Harley, his labours on the peace of Utrecht, and his real intentions with regard to carrying out the Act of Settlement on the death of Queen Anne, all afford matter of the highest biographical and historical interest, and present problems which have never yet been solved.

Side by side with his struggles as a party leader and a statesman, it has been endeavoured to illustrate his private life. The author cannot charge himself with having neglected anything which might throw light on Bolingbroke's career. All that has been written on

the subject in the Library of the British Museum, the Lord Advocate's Library in Edinburgh, and the Library of Trinity College at Dublin, has been sifted; nor have the materials in the Manuscript department of the Museum, and in the State Paper Office, been neglected. It would not have been difficult to have printed for the first time many more documents than will be found quoted in the course of the narrative; but it was not desirable to make the book a mere collection of papers. The author would particularly call attention to the interesting Letter of the Dowager Countess of Rochester to the Lady Johanna St. John on the death of the repentant Wilmot. On this subject there are several other letters, with which pages might have been filled. The despatch from Lord Stanhope to Lord Stair, of the 30th of March, 1716, will be found to confirm Bolingbroke's repeated statements of the unconditional offer of a pardon made to him even at so early a period; and it is of the utmost importance in showing the justice or injustice with which he was afterwards treated. His retirement in France, and in England, at Marcilly, La Source, Dawley, Chanteloup, and Battersea, all offer interesting scenes for contemplation; and the history of these closing years will be found very instructive and suggestive. The Lettres de Lord Vicomte Bolingbroke, published with notes at Paris in 1808, afford the most authentic materials for depicting his life in France. But the dates of these letters, particularly those to the Abbé Alari, are untrustworthy, and can only be used when corrected by other authorities,

such as the letters to Sir William Windham. The epistles Bolingbroke received on the death of his friend Windham from Pope, Lyttelton, and Marchmont, show in a very interesting light the characters of the different writers. The author, while presenting a brief analysis of Bolingbroke's writings as they were produced, has not thought it necessary to enter very fully into the controversial questions about philosophy and religion which occupied so much of the later period of his life. Neither has he quoted at any length the correspondence of Swift, Pope, and Bolingbroke, which is in the hands of every reader; nor made any long extracts from Bolingbroke's published writings. Throughout the work the aim has been to subordinate the general history of the period, in order to present fully the details of Bolingbroke's personal history.

Of the result it is not for the author to speak. He has endeavoured to present an impartial view of the subject. Bolingbroke's life abounds in vicissitudes; there are great changes of scene and of fortune; he was born with great intellectual endowments, and also with the strongest passions; and it is assuredly a curious and interesting study to observe their effects through the eventful times in which his lot was cast. His character assumes by turns many varying and apparently contradictory phases; and yet, when carefully analysed, it appears peculiarly consistent and uniform as a whole, working towards a definite if not a very satisfactory end. Why was it that, in action as well as in speculation, a man so gifted as Boling-

broke was so completely unsuccessful? Why was it that his life was but a series of defeats? If the author has performed in any satisfactory manner his biographical duty, the answer will be evident and require no commentary of his own.

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THE LIFE

OF

LORD BOLINGBROKE.

CHAPTER I.

1678—1700.

EARLY YEARS.

Bolingbroke was accustomed, in exile, to boast of the nobleness of his ancestry. Some of the proud and supercilious French nobles listened to the details of his family origin with politeness, but also with scepticism. He has himself depicted Harley as indulging in similar pride; and has taken care to let us know that, in his opinion, it was only in his vain discourses over claret that the splendour of Harley's origin could be found. But the antiquity and magnificence of the house of St. John might excusably dazzle one who wished indeed to be regarded as a philosopher, but who never affected to be indifferent to the honours of an illustrious pedigree. Bolingbroke used to say exultingly, that his ancestors on one side were of the highest Norman, and on the other, of the noblest Saxon origin of which the records of England could boast; and that he thus united in his person the blood of both the conquering and the conquered race.

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In a similar spirit he would declare that, during the civil wars, his ancestors were distinguished on both sides, and that on both sides they rendered eminent services to the causes they separately upheld.

The glories of the family of St. John are matters of written record. William de St. John was a knight who came over with the Conqueror. He held an important post in the Norman army at the battle of Hastings, and has by some been called the quarter-master-general, and by others, grand-master of the artillery, and supervisor of the waggons and carriages; though what the artillery was in a Norman army, some of the present distinguished officers of that arm of the British service would perhaps find it difficult to affirm. One of his sons, a person of great distinction in the reign of Rufus, inherited all his English estates, and acquired a considerable addition to his wealth and honours by his warlike services in Wales. This knight's granddaughter, marrying Adam de Port, a great baron, whose ancestors had for centuries been men of renown long before the Saxons were defeated at Hastings, took his mother's name, and styled himself William de St. John, Lord of Basing, and son and heir of Adam de Port.*

The family of St. John thus, as the learned in such genealogies say, derives through the female line. In the middle ages, the scions of this house extended their power and influence, winning barony after barony, and shooting out far and wide into county after county. The lordship of Bletsoe was acquired by the union of Sir Oliver de St. John with the sister of Lord Beauchamp, in the reign of Henry VI. This lady, after the death of her husband, married the

* 'Filius et hæres Adæ de Port.'

Duke of Somerset, and had a daughter, who was afterwards united to Edmund Tudor, Duke of Richmond, and became the mother of Henry VII., and the progenitor of the great line of Tudor sovereigns.

This connection with the Tudors was never forgotten by the family of St. John. A painted glass window at the east end of the church of Battersea had portraits of this Margaret Beauchamp, Henry VII., and Queen Elizabeth. In the centre were the royal arms, supported on each side by the heraldic emblazonry of the St. Johns, and of the families with whom they were allied. When the old church was rebuilt in the last century, the eastern window, with all its embellishments, was completely restored, as indeed it well deserved to be.

Under the Tudor dynasty, the St. Johns continued to flourish. But a member of the family, who was studying law in the reign of Elizabeth, unfortunately slew in a duel one of her Majesty's guards, and was obliged in another country to take to the profession of arms. Fortune, however, was his friend still; and the Irish wars in the times of Elizabeth and the first James, were as advantageous to him as the Welsh wars had been to his remote ancestor in the time of Rufus. He became an Irish peer, with the title of Viscount Grandison, and an English peer, with the title of Baron Tregoze, and had grants of the manors of Battersea and Wandsworth. He died, however, childless, and with him the English barony expired.* But the manors of Battersea and

* A monument in the north wall of the church at Battersea has busts of this peer and his wife in white marble, with a Latin inscription of historical as well as family interest :—

"Deo trio et uno sacrum.—Olivero Nicholai Sct. John de Lydeard filio secundo eq. aurato antiquissimus et illustribus de Bellocampo de Bletsoe, Grandisonis et Tregoziæ familiis oriundo terra marique domi forisque belli

Wandsworth were left by him to his brother's only son, John St. John, who was an eminent royalist, and had three sons all slain in the service of Charles I., during the civil wars.

But while one branch of the St. Johns was giving such decided proofs of loyalty to the Crown, there were others giving not less equivocal signs of attachment to the liberties of the people. The first Earl of Bolingbroke, one of James I.'s peers, was a prosperous member of the elder branch of the St. Johns. His son was elevated by Charles I. to the House of Peers, as St. John of Bletsoe; but both the father and the son violently espoused the side of the Parliament. "They were," said Clarendon, "a mutinous family."* The son, whose life was extremely licentious, was killed at the battle of Edgehill.

As the troubles between Charles and his Parliament grew apace, they were sternly watched by a lawyer of the same family in Lincoln's Inn, over whose origin there was the bar sinister, but who was to eclipse in renown all the legitimate members of the house. He first rose into eminence by arguing, in defence of Hampden, the case of ship-money in the Exchequer Chamber. His dark and melancholy features were seldom lit up with a smile; it was only when the king committed one of those imprudent steps which precipitated the civil war, and

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pacisque artibus egregio, divæ Elizabethæ e nobilissima pensionariorum cohorte suis inde meritis et singulari divi Jacobi gratia in Hibernia instrumentis bellicis præfecto, Conaciæ Pro-præside et, Questori summo, et Regis vicario, Procomiti de Grandisonis et Tregoziæ de Hyworth, in Anglia, Baroni, eidem divo Jacobo et filio ejus piissimo a secretioribus et sanctioribus conciliis; Postquam is annos honoribus æquaverat et tranquilissime senuerat somnienti similiter extinctos Johann de Sanct. John Eques et Baronettus ac fratre nepos et hæres avunculo mœrentissimo mœtissimus p. in ecclesia de Battersey. Vixit annos 70; mor. 29 Decembris, 1630."

* History of the Great Rebellion.

from which there was no retreat, that any joyous emotion could be traced on the sombre visage of Oliver St. John, who became one of the leading parliamentary statesmen, and was afterwards made by Cromwell a chief-justice of England. The John St. John of Battersea, who lost his three sons in the royal cause, left his estate to a grandson; but this young man died before he came of age; and the family honours and possessions then reverted to his uncle, Walter St. John. Walter St. John was both heir and executor. He buried his nephew of whom he inherited the estates with such magnificence that he subjected himself to a prosecution for offending against the laws of heraldry. It appears, from a manuscript deposition of the herald William Ryley in the British Museum, that at Sir John St. John's funeral there were more escutcheons than were used at the burial of a duke, and more pennons than at the burial of a member of the royal family; and that the precedent which the grateful Walter St. John had set in burying his kinsman in such a manner was looked upon as dangerously revolutionary.* He married Johanna, the daughter of the Chief-justice, and thus blended in a kind of family alliance the blood of the stern statesman of the Parliament with that of the devoted royalist, whose three sons died in the cause of Charles I.

From this union, in the second generation, sprung Henry St. John, afterwards Viscount Bolingbroke, whose troubled and eventful life I have undertaken to sketch briefly in these pages.

Sir Walter St. John's son Henry was Bolingbroke's father, by his first wife, the Lady Mary, second daughter and joint heiress of Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick. After her death, Sir Walter contracted a second union

* Harleian MSS., 5176, $\frac{2}{11}$, 15.

with a French lady, whose descendants were to inherit the honours which Bolingbroke obtained.

The members of the family seem to have been a long-lived race. Sir Walter St. John saw his grandson attain eminence as an orator and statesman. Bolingbroke could not, like Byron, deplore the circumstances which left him early without a friend, protector, and guide. So far from being "lord of himself, that heritage of woe," he was, as a quaint biographer assures us, blessed with two fathers. Sir Walter, his grandfather, and Henry, his father, appear to have generally resided together at Battersea.

Sir Walter and his wife Johanna were, however, the dominant spirits in the household. But the husband was not, whatever his wife may have been, bred a Presbyterian; the parish records of Battersea still testify to Sir Walter St. John's care of the Church. He raised a new gallery to the old edifice; repaired the structure thoroughly at his own expense; and endowed a charity-school for the instruction of the poor children in the neighbourhood. He seems to have been a country gentleman of much public spirit; moderate both in his political and religious opinions; and earnestly desirous of doing his duty as a landed proprietor and knight of the shire. He lived to the age of eighty-seven.*

His son Henry, Bolingbroke's father, was, in comparison, a man of pleasure, in days when pleasure meant something a great deal worse. He lived, however, still longer than Sir Walter, dying at ninety. He troubled himself very little either with political or religious affairs, sauntering, during the London season, from the

* "Sir Walter St. John, Bart., ætat. 87; buried July 9, 1708."—Extract from the Parish Register.

Chocolate House to the St. James's Coffee House, and, as his son became an eminent politician, looking like a dissipated old beau of the time of Charles II., or, with some differences, resembling the old fogies who still totter about Pall Mall, regretting the halcyon days of the Regency. He did not escape the effects of that tumultuous carnival which began with the Restoration and continued throughout the reign of Charles II. He was the Mr. St. John, who, in a brawl, killed Sir William Estcourt, Bart., and was persuaded to plead guilty of murder, though at the most the crime could be nothing more than manslaughter. This conviction gave rise to a very interesting controversy. Though Henry St. John had only pleaded guilty on the confident assurance of a pardon, even in those days of high prerogative it was doubted whether the king had the power to save from the gallows one who had been found guilty of murder; and Dr. Thomas Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln, set himself gravely to solve the doubt by texts of Scripture from the days of Noah.*

This unfortunate event to the family at Battersea occurred in the year 1684. At that time, when his father was lying under sentence of death, little Henry St. John, the future Viscount Bolingbroke, was a child of about six years of age. He has, however, been generally represented as much older. In the article St. John, written for the Biographica Britannica, it is stated that he was born in 1662; in the anonymous biography, published in 1754, the same year is given

* See Barlow's Cases of Conscience, 1692. Burnet, in his Memoirs of his Own Time, states that Henry St. John only obtained his pardon by paying sixteen thousand pounds to Charles II. and two of his mistresses; the money may have been paid for the restitution of the forfeited estates, though there is no trace of such a bargain in the Patent Roll on this forfeiture, which I have carefully examined in the Record Office. Pat. Roll. 36, Ch. ii., Part 8, No. 15.

as that of his birth: Goldsmith in this, as in most other questions relating to Bolingbroke, closely followed these accounts; but in a letter in the Egremont Papers, Bolingbroke, writing on New Year's Day, 1738, says, "Some months hence I shall be threescore;" and this corresponds with the statement of his age on his monumental tablet in the church at Battersea. The point is also finally settled by the parish register, in which it is recorded that he was baptized on the 10th of October, 1678.*

Of Bolingbroke's early years little is known, and that little has been much misrepresented. It was the common taunt of the Whigs against the ministry of Harley and St. John, that though they professed to be such zealous champions of the Church of England, and wished to be regarded as the idols of the October Club, that they had both, in fact, been brought up among the Presbyterians. Bolingbroke's education was directed by his grandfather and grandmother; but Sir Walter St. John was certainly after the Restoration a member of the Church of England; and, though Oliver St. John was connected with the Puritan party, there is no evidence that he adopted their extreme religious tenets, or that he had any fanatical prejudices against the Established Church. His daughter Johanna co-operated with her husband in his efforts to promote the welfare of the church at Battersea, and she was the kind patroness of a distinguished clergyman, the Rev. Simon Patrick. For some years he resided with the family as chaplain, was afterwards preacher at St. Paul's, Covent Garden, rose, after the Revolution, to be Bishop of Chichester, and

* The following extracts from the Parish Register set this question beyond dispute:—

"Henry, son of Henry St. John, Esq., baptized Oct. 10, 1678."

"Henry St. John, late Viscount Bolingbroke, buried Dec. 18, 1751."

was thence transferred to the see of Ely. He was, though an affected and prolix writer, one of the most distinguished of the London divines, and one of the two English clergymen who had the celebrated conference with the Roman Catholic priests, in the presence of James II., about the disputed points of their respective creeds. He always spoke of Sir Walter St. John and his wife with gratitude, and testified his respect to them in the prefatory dedication of his Mensa Mystica.

These facts are somewhat opposed to the notion that the household at Battersea was a gloomy sanctuary of Presbyterianism in the reign of Charles II. and his brother James. But it has been said that the favourite guide of Bolingbroke's grandmother was an eccentric Presbyterian divine, Daniel Burgess, and that this Burgess was a mere fanatic. Daniel Burgess was not a Presbyterian, though he was a dissenter from the Establishment; and so far from being a fanatic, was a man of real piety and pointed humour. He was the son of a clergyman in Wiltshire, and was probably thus known to Sir Walter St. John by local associations. He was born if not on, at least near, one of the family estates. He was for some time a schoolmaster in Ireland, under the protection of Lord Orrery; but after the Restoration he established himself in England, and became a Nonconformist. A Puritan he certainly never was: indeed the Puritans looked upon him as a profane joker. His good sayings were keenly relished by the plain citizens of London: he might be properly regarded as a kind of dissenting Hugh Latimer in the days of the last Stuarts. A lawsuit was defined by Burgess to be a suit for life. After the Revolution he gave a singular reason for the Hebrews being called Israelites. "It was," he said, "because God ever hated Jacobites,

and therefore Jacob's sons were not so called, but Israelites." He was obnoxious to the High Church mob, and his chapel in Lincoln's-Inn Fields was destroyed during the Sacheverell riots, which had so much influence in bringing the grandson of his old patron into office.*

The definition Burgess was heard giving of thorough-paced doctrine, as that which comes in at one ear, passes straight through the head, and goes out of the other ear, certainly says nothing for his fanaticism, whatever it does for his wit.†

But a sentence of a letter which Bolingbroke nominally wrote to Pope has been made the text for an indignant commentary on the stern Presbyterianism of the family at Battersea. In ridiculing Chrysostom's Commentaries upon St. Matthew and St. John, Bolingbroke wrote, "It puts me in mind of a Puritanical parson, Dr. Manton, who, if I mistake not, for I have never looked into the folio since I was a boy, and condemned sometimes to read in it, made a hundred and nineteen sermons on the hundred and nineteenth psalm.‡ From this single allusion, a harrowing picture has been drawn of the little St. John poring day after day and year after year in Dr. Manton's ponderous folio of sermons, his strength wasting, his eyes growing dim, in obedience to the rigid Presbyterian commands of his grandfather and grandmother. Bolingbroke's remark is somewhat playfully made, and scarcely bears out the

* See Hobbs's Continuation of Grainger, 2. 159 ; and the History of John Bull, book xii. Swift, in his pretended letter of thanks in the name of the Kit-Cat Club to the Bishop of St. Asaph, says, "Oh, exquisite ! How pathetically does your Lordship complain of the downfall of Whigism and Daniel Burgess' meeting-house !"

† See Biographia Britannica, article Yalden.

‡ Introduction to the Essay addressed to Pope.

notion of his vision "being haunted by substantial persecutions." "Condemned sometimes to read in Dr. Manton's folio," does not mean every day, and every hour in the day, as though it had been made his sole text-book. When this is the only instance that is given of the hardships the boy underwent from his Presbyterian guardians, the persecutions he suffered were not, perhaps, quite intolerable. From the style he adopted when speaking of all divinity, even his language about Dr. Manton's folio may possibly have been a little exaggerated. It would be difficult to say where a child could have had a better home or wiser guardianship than in the household of Sir Walter and Johanna St. John at Battersea during those years of wild licence which set in with the Restoration, and were not terminated as the boy was growing up, when James II. lost his crown and the Revolution was slowly establishing itself.

We are not altogether left without evidence of what kind of persons the household of Battersea really were. In the Manuscript Department of the British Museum there are five interesting letters from Anne, the Countess Dowager of Rochester, daughter of Sir John St. John, when she was eighty years of age, to her kinswoman Johanna, the Lady St. John. They give an account of the last illness and conversion of her son, the celebrated rake, John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester. The character of Johanna the grandmother of Bolingbroke, may easily be estimated from that of her friend and correspondent. The first letter begins, "Sweet sister;" and they all exhibit a charming picture of sincere piety and maternal love watching over the death-bed of a repentant son in the wild and profligate days of Charles II. and his courtiers. "Truly, sister," writes the aged Countess Dow-

ager of the dying Wilmot, "I think I may say, without partiality, that he has never been heard to say, when he speaks of religion, an unintelligible word, nor of anything else; but one night, of which I writ you word, he was disordered in his head, but then he said no hurt, only a little ribble-rabble, which had no hurt in it; but it was observed by his wife and I particularly, that whenever he spoke of God that night, he spoke very well, and with great sense, which we wondered at. Since that night he has never had a minute of disorder in his head; though last night, if you had heard him pray, I am sure you would not have took his words for the words of a madman, but such as come from a better spirit than the mind of a mere man. But let the wicked of the world say what they please of him, the reproach of them are an honour to him. And I take comfort that the devil rages against my son: it shows his power over him is subdued in him, and that he has no share in him. Many messages and compliments his old acquaintances send him, but he is so far from receiving them that still his answer is, 'Let me see none of them; and I would to God that I had never conversed with some of them.' One of his physicians, thinking to please him, told him the king drank his health the other day. He looked earnestly upon him, and said never a word, but turned his face from him. I thank God his thoughts are wholly taken off from the world, and I hope, whether he lives or dies, will ever be so. But they are fine people at Windsor; God forgive them. Sure there never was so great a malice performed as to entitle my son to a lampoon at this time, when, for aught they know, he is upon his death."*

* Additional MSS. 6269, f. 31.

This letter is addressed, "For the Lady St. John, at Sir Walter St. John's house at Battersay." It brings back the life of the old time vividly before us. As we read it, we see the venerable dowager bending over her writing-table, the brilliant Wilmot, with the hectic flush and the hacking cough, on his death-bed, praying to Him whose laws he had so long set at defiance, his gay companions calling at the door, or sending half-railing messages, the giddy Charles and his courtiers making lampoons on the repentant sinner, laughing at the reports about his piety, and declaring that Wilmot was mad. The Lady Johanna, "at Sir Walter St. John's house at Battersea," sharing the dowager's indignation at the lies that had been put into circulation about her nephew's sanity, and rejoicing at his conversion, rises not less visibly before the mind. That Battersea household, away from the smoke and impurities of London, with the green lawn before the door sloping down to the river, the church on the left, with a wicket-gate only separating the lawn of the house from the churchyard, and the gabled cottages of what was then a pleasant little country village on the Thames, was, on the whole, very enviable; and it would have been better for the future Viscount Bolingbroke if his father and himself had been more impressed with the virtues of Sir Walter St. John, and the good, serious Lady Johanna.

The school and college selected for their grandson to complete his education scarcely show that the old couple were inclined to carry out any theory of harsh Presbyterian discipline. He was sent to Eton, and remained in that illustrious school for several years. He is said to have been there at the same time with young Robert Walpole, and it has been added, that

the seeds of that deadly enmity which they afterwards displayed against each other were sown in the school-room and cricket-ground at Eton. But Walpole was at least two years St. John's senior, and between boys of such different ages, though there may sometimes be much friendship, there is seldom any very keen rivalry. The real struggle between them was yet to begin.

From Eton, the young St. John was sent to the college of all others least likely to be chosen by a family very strongly tinctured with Presbyterian prejudices. He became an undergraduate of that stronghold of monarchy and of the Church of England, Christ Church, Oxford. With Montague, Dr. Friend, Atterbury, Coleman, and Harcourt, he always delighted to call himself a Christ Church man; and considered that a Christ Church man had always an especial claim to his patronage.*

At Christ Church he remained some years; but of those college days little is recorded. It has never been pretended that he studied hard, or that he acquired any academical distinction. Christ Church was in those days, as the Phalaris controversy proved, more conspicuous for loyalty than for learning. But the absence of University honours at that time cannot be considered evidence of the want of abilities, or even of the attainments of the student. St. John was a young patrician, of a good family, and of great expectations. A course of hard study would have been considered almost derogatory to the dignity of a fine gentleman; and it is to this character that St. John in his youth chiefly

* See Swift's Journal to Stella, and Bolingbroke's Correspondence, ii. 557. "As to Dr. Friend, I have known him long, and cannot be without some partiality for him, since he was of Christ Church." Bolingbroke to Shrewsbury, December 3, 1713.

aspired. That the powers of his memory were great, that his talents were lively, and that he could easily acquire whatever he set himself to learn, all this can readily be believed. But he had very little inclination to learn anything; and he soon plunged headlong into the vortex of dissipation.

On this point there is no dispute. Many things were then pardoned in young men of fashion; but the recklessness of St. John's pursuit of pleasure shocked even those who were the most indulgent to the license of the age. Goldsmith, however, endeavoured to persuade himself and his readers, that his licentiousness was only the wild outbreak of genius, and a proof of the brilliancy of St. John's intellect. "This period," the Doctor wrote, "might have been compared to that of fermentation in liquors, which grow muddy before they brighten; but it must also be confessed that those liquors which never ferment are seldom clear."* This simile was not original when Goldsmith used it in his Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning; and it is employed almost in the same words in his Life of Bolingbroke, as the most profound and beautiful of aphorisms. Never was there an illustration of more questionable truth. If licentiousness be a proof of brilliant parts, the world will certainly never want men of genius. Unfortunately, St. John's dissipation was character: in one form or another it accompanied him through life.

From Christ Church he removed to London. He was still more wild and reckless in the metropolis than he had been at Oxford. At that time the tide of national immorality which had distinguished the reign of Charles II. was on the ebb. The cold manners of

* Goldsmith's Works, Coningham's edition, iv. 150.

King William, the pure and religious life of Mary, who had lately died, the reaction against all that was fashionable in the time of the Stuarts, had all done something to withstand the torrent of vice and licentiousness. There were young men of the higher classes not ashamed of being virtuous. But whatever was most profligate in the preceding reigns, was thought by St. John worthy of his imitation. He avowedly made his relative, Rochester, his model; and endeavoured in every kind of debauchery to surpass his original. He was notorious for drinking extraordinary quantities of wine, and for keeping Miss Gumley, the most expensive woman of the town. Even in the middle of the last century the wild conduct of his youth was talked about; and one old man mentioned to Dr. Goldsmith the fact of his having seen St. John and some of his boon companions running, in a drunken fit, naked through the Park.*

But as Rochester, however dissipated, was a poet, so St. John, amid all his shameless licentiousness and thoughtless riot, wished also to put in a claim to poetical honours. Dryden, deprived of his laureatship, covered with obloquy for his alleged apostasy from the Protestant faith, and drudging for Tonson, had for years been engaged on his translation of Virgil. All who studied literature felt themselves interested in the completion of this great work. The subscription list contained the names of the most distinguished people in the kingdom. Young Mr. Joseph Addison, of Magdalen College, Oxford, had already distinguished himself highly by his Latin poems, and he now gave evidence of his matchless powers for English prose composition by a graceful Essay on the Georgics, which was prefixed

* Goldsmith's Works, iv. 150.

to Dryden's translation. Some complimentary verses, among others, bore the signature, H. St. John, when the Dryden version of the Roman poet was first given to the world in the July of 1697. This poetical effusion is, on the whole, the best of St. John's metrical compositions, and showed that the young, dissipated man of fashion, at least respected and admired Dryden, as he was struggling with poverty, in his uncheered old age. Independent, therefore, of any literary merit, these verses are not without interest :—

"No undisputed monarch govern'd yet
With universal sway the realms of wit.
Nature could never such expense afford;
Each several province owned a several lord.
A poet then had his poetic wife,
One Muse embraced, and married for his life:
By the stale thing his poetry was cloy'd,
His fancy lessen'd, and his fire destroy'd.
But Nature, grown extravagantly kind,
With all her fairest gifts adorned your mind.
The different powers were then united found,
And you the universal monarch crown'd.
Your mighty sway your great desert secures,
And every Muse and every Grace is yours.
To none confined, by turns you all enjoy!
Sated with these, you to another fly;
So, sultan-like, in your seraglio stand,
While wishing Misses wait for your command:
Thus no decay, no want of vigour find;
Such is your fancy, boundless as your mind!
Not all the blasts of time can do you wrong;
Young spite of age—in spite of weakness strong.
Time, like Alcides, strikes you to the ground;
You, like Antæus, from each fall rebound."*

In 1714, when Bolingbroke was at the height of his fame, these lines, with a few alterations and some additions, made their appearance again in a French work, published in Holland, entitled, Le Chef-d'œuvre d'un Inconnu, avec des Remarques. The unknown

* Dryden's Works : Scott's second edition, xiii. 293.

work was a whimsical and satirical ballad with ironical remarks, in ridicule of the abuses of learning, by the Chevalier de Thémeseuil, otherwise known as St. Hyacinthe. There were in the Preface complimentary odes and addresses in abundance, and the Chevalier has been gravely reprehended for appropriating St. John's panegyric on Dryden and addressing it to himself. It does not, however, appear to be at all certain whether Bolingbroke himself did not actually send these verses to Thémeseuil, and whether, in the midst of other occupations, having no time to devote to the Muses, he did not of his own accord thus make them do duty a second time. The lines which begin the address, and which were not in the panegyric as it was originally printed by Dryden, undoubtedly were written by the same author as the other verses :—

> "Great Mathanase, in quest of this rich ore,
> You've boldly launched out new worlds to explore;
> You've found a fruitful soil by none yet trod,
> Reserved for heroes or some demi-god;
> The product here you've bravely made your own,
> And by just title you deserved a crown."

Had Thémeseuil been ever so audacious, it is scarcely likely that he could always afterwards, without St. John's own authority, have indicated him to be their author, and had printed under them the acknowledgment in the words, "Henricus de Bolingbroke : Annâ à Secretis." The compliment consisted in its having been paid by so eminent a person as the English Secretary of State. The verses were not so brilliant, nor the panegyric so striking, that they should have been purloined solely for their merits.

To Dryden they were very properly applied. Time had struck the great poet to the ground, but he had indeed rebounded from it like another Antæus.

Old as he was, his genius in these last years grew brighter and brighter. About three months after the publication of the translation of Virgil, St. John one morning, called upon the veteran poet, and found him trembling with nervous excitement. The young man inquired the cause, and he received in reply from the hands of Dryden the manuscript of the noble Ode to St. Cæcilia's Day, the most sublime production of the kind in the language. It had been written at a sitting during the preceding night. It was, of course, afterwards patiently revised and rewritten, but the first rough draught sufficiently evinced that the work was a masterpiece. St. John, with all his wild recklessness, at this, the most giddy and licentious portion of his career, really seems, as Pope declared, to have been Dryden's friend and protector. It is creditable to him to find that, from the first, whatever may have been his failings, indifference to the claims of literature, or want of sympathy with literary men, was never one.

Another day he was at Dryden's when a knock was heard at the door. "This," said Dryden, "is Tonson: you will take care not to depart before he goes away, for I have not completed the sheet which I promised him: if you leave me unprotected I must suffer all the rudeness to which his resentment can prompt his tongue." This story curiously shows Dryden's aversion to meet his publisher alone; but he was not quite in such a state of abject dependence as it would seem to imply. A stinging epigram, and the threat of another, could always bring the publisher to terms. No threats or cajolery that Jacob Tonson, who was secretary to the Kit Cat, and, of course, a zealous Whig, could employ, would prevail on the struggling poet to dedicate his Virgil to King William, and it is

well known that Tonson was at last compelled to resort to the acute device of having the nose of Eneas lengthened in the engraving in imitation of that of the deliverer of glorious memory.*

While Dryden struggled on for the brief period after the composition of the immortal ode, Alexander's Feast, biographer and historians almost lose sight of young St. John altogether. He spent, however, about two years on the Continent. There can be little doubt his foreign tour begun shortly after the September of 1697. He was some time at Milan, which he afterwards pleasantly remembered, and recalled to the remembrance of the Austrian minister, Baron de Seckingen.† He was probably absent from England during the greater portion of the year 1698 and 1699. The Earl of Jersey, who went to Paris as the English ambassador after the peace of Ryswick, at this period, was a relative of St. John, both being descended from the Viscount Grandison of the reigns of Elizabeth and the first James; and I have little doubt that it was in Lord Jersey's train St. John acquired his first experience of Parisian life, and made the acquaintance of Prior, the Secretary to the Embassy. One accomplishment St. John certainly acquired at this time, which was of the highest importance to the future Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He attained a thorough mastery of the French language, so that he was enabled to speak it and write it with ease and correctness. This appears to have been nearly all the advantage he derived from his

* See Dryden's Letter to his Son, September, 1697.

† "C'est une grande justice que le Baron de Forstrier m'a rendu quand il vous a assuré, que je ne discontinuois pas à avoir dans ces sentiments d'amitié, dont j'ai toujours fait profession, depuis la connoissance que nous fimes à Milan."—Bolingbroke à Monsieur le Baron de Seckingen, 22 d'Août, 1711.

residence in Paris. The infidelity which was slowly gathering strength among the people of rank in France was not without its influence on his mind. Dissipated men of fashion in England had, after the example of Charles II., adopted a languid kind of Hobbism, as the most convenient form of scepticism which their indifference to all religion could assume. St. John readily imbibed the same doctrines, which, in contact with the irreligion that was clumsily veiled under an appearance of sanctity in the court of Louis XIV., was shortly to ripen in the young Englishman's mind into a dogmatic hatred of priests and divines, all the more fierce and intolerant because he was obliged to display an outward conformity with the religious prejudices of a party professing implicit belief in the Church of England.

In the year 1700 St. John was again at home. He had not yet abandoned his poetical aspirations, but, on the contrary, wrote an elaborate ode, Almahide, which is about the dullest and most uninteresting composition of the kind ever written by a person of real ability. The young man intimates that he had been seeking the gloomy abode of Wisdom and Philosophy; that he was, however, tired of the search; and had at length returned to his native home, the home of the Muses. But fair Almahide refused to smile upon him; she was reserved for a more fortunate lover. Poor, however, as St. John's invocation was, it was not all original; the last line and the last thought, as he honestly confesses, was borrowed from his friend George Granville, afterwards Lord Lansdowne, whom he evidently regarded as the successful rival to Almahide's favours. He concludes:—

*

"But Virtue with her magic wand
Encircles round the happy pair:
Thus when the moon on Larian Latmus lay,
And rapt in pleasure laughed her hours away;
Her beauty and her light to all mankind
Without distinction shined;
But to Endymion was her love confined."

St. John's muse was not a very refined goddess. Both in the verses to Dryden and Almahide, the prevailing imagery is such as would most naturally occur to the mind of a young rake about town, writing on the charms of the lady he professed for the time to adore. It is coarse and sensual, without being either brilliant or poetical. Poetry was not his province: his numbers were harsh, his imagination cold, his diction commonplace. A prologue to a tragedy of the Earl of Orrery, a few verses to Swift, and some lines in imitation of Horace, written in a post-chaise, were about all the poetical effusions his muse ever indulged in, after he had once become immersed in politics and business. Even these exceptional rhymes were sufficiently tame. Swift sometimes spoke of them with contempt; and Pope, ready as he was to admit Bolingbroke's highest claims as a statesman and philosopher, resolutely maintained a blank silence on his poetical pretensions.*

While writing Almahide and still hoping to be regarded as a poet, St. John was as dissipated as ever. Foreign travel had in no degree checked his hot pursuit of what he considered pleasure. His life was spent between taverns, and houses more disreputable than taverns. Miss Clara A——, a nymph who sold oranges in what was then a fashionable lounging-place, the lobby of the Court of Requests, was for some time the object of his idolatry. She

* See Bolingbroke to Swift, Sept. 12, 1724.

had been a common woman of the town, the mistress of low profligates, when St. John wished her to become exclusively his own. But the lady had many lovers; and her infidelity was not to be restrained. St. John thought of trying what a poetical remonstrance would do. He wrote some verses to his unfaithful mistress, which depict his own habits and state of mind quite as much as those of the frail but lovely Clara.

The verses begin with the invocation—

> "Dear, thoughtless Clara, to my verse attend,
> Believe for once thy lover and thy friend."

St. John points out, that while strength is the attribute of "man's imperial race," so beauty is that of woman; but that there was nothing worse than for the one to be misapplied, and the other to become the prey of the most dissolute of mankind. He particularly asks whether Clara's angelic face and delicious charms were intended for low ruffians in their vilest haunts; and he answers—

> "No, Clara, no; that person and that mind
> Were formed by Nature, and by Heaven designed
> For nobler ends: to these return, though late;
> Return to these, and so avert thy fate.
> Think, Clara, think; nor will that thought be vain;
> Thy slave, thy Harry, doom'd to drag his chain
> Of love ill-treated and abused, that he
> From more inglorious chains might rescue thee:
> Thy drooping health restored by his fond care,
> Once more thy beauty its full lustre wear;
> Moved by his love, by his example taught,
> Soon shall thy soul, once more with virtue fraught,
> With kind and generous truth thy bosom warm,
> And thy fair mind, like thy fair person, charm.
> To virtue thus and to thyself restored,
> By all admired, by one alone adored,
> Be to thy Harry ever kind and true,
> And live for him who more than dies for you."

His earnest remonstrance was unavailing. Clara was not moved by his love, nor taught by his example. She soon again stood by her orange-stall in the Court of Requests.*

St. John was now twenty-two years of age. His friends thought that marriage might rescue him from the career of profligacy in which he seemed to run riot; and an advantageous alliance was soon settled. The lady was the daughter and one of the coheiresses of Sir Henry Winchescomb, Bart., a country gentleman, of an ancient family, and considerable landed property in the county of Berkshire. He was a descendant from a celebrated clothier in the reign of Henry VIII., known familiarly as Jack of Newbury, who was one of the first of our merchant princes, and, in the time of Henry VIII., showed a public spirit worthy of the most eminent of his successors. At Newbury he kept a hundred looms going; his interests were essentially pacific; but Jack of Newbury, the hero of many an old ballad, had very decided patriotic and warlike propensities. When England was threatened with invasion by the Scots, he equipped a hundred of his workmen at his own expense, marched at their head to the Borders, and commanded them at the battle of Flodden Field. Jack returned in triumph to his town, and there settling down once more in quiet, showed himself as anxious to promote the welfare of his fellow-townsmen of Newbury as he had been to stake his wealth and life on a cast for the honour of his country. He repaired the church, and in the last century, the pulpit and tower, built at his own cost, were still pointed out by the grateful people of New-

* These verses were published in Dodsley's Miscellanies. Horace Walpole has also maliciously preserved them in his Memoirs of the Reign of George II.

bury, as they formerly did the house of the high-minded clothier and public benefactor.

St. John's marriage promised every worldly advantage. The lady was of good family, and brought with her considerable wealth, and the prospect of more. His father and grandfather were both alive at the time, and settled their family estates upon him in the counties of Wilts, Surrey, and Middlesex; and prosecuted and attainted as he afterwards was, the good effects of the prudent arrangements they made for him, he experienced at the more advanced periods of his life.* But, unfortunately, marriage had not the results they had hoped for on St. John's headstrong nature. He had been a rake as a bachelor; he was a rake as a married man. This conduct naturally produced great domestic unhappiness. Scenes occurred of the most violent nature between the young couple, who, it has been said, soon formally separated; he complaining openly of his wife's violent temper, and she of his shameless infidelities. But though their quarrels may have been numerous, their separation was certainly not of that decided and permanent nature it has been generally represented. I shall afterwards bring forward evidence to show, that while St. John was Secretary of State, his wife was, up to 1713, still the mistress of his house; and that their separation, if a final separation there ever was, could have occurred only in the year before the close of his ministerial career in England by the death of Queen Anne. On this point there seems to have been considerable error.

Immediately after his marriage a field of ambition

* See the Proceedings of the House of Lords on the Reversal of Bolingbroke's Attainder, 20th April, 1725.—Parliamentary History, vol. viii. p. 460.

was opened before him, in itself sufficient, as might have been expected, to subdue his wild extravagances, and to call forth all the higher and better energies of his nature.

An understanding was come to at the time of this marriage, that he should succeed his father in the representation of the borough of Wootton Bassett. For many years this constituency, and that of the county of Wilts, had been proud to select their members from the family of the St. Johns; and the manner in which the representation descended from the grandfather, through the father to the son, as the records of those times still enable us to trace, form one of the most instructive and pleasing characteristics of the old rural and national life of England. In Cromwell's reformed parliament of 1656, Sir Walter St. John first took his seat for Wiltshire. In the parliament of Richard Cromwell he represented the same county, while his son Henry, who had evidently just come of age, was chosen for Wootton Bassett. Through the whole of the reign of Charles II., James II., and William III., one of these St. Johns appears almost to have monopolized a seat for the borough and the other for the county. Sometimes the son appears to have changed constituencies with the father, and when very rarely the names of one or both of them are not found in the lists of representatives, as the father is omitted in the third parliament of Charles II., and in the first and only parliament of James II., they soon both make their appearance on the roll of the Commons again, and must in their parliamentary experience, and the length of their parliamentary career, have been considered among the oldest members of the House. In the convention and the second parliament of King

William, Henry St. John continued to represent Wootton Bassett; but in the third he sat for Wiltshire, in the place of Sir Walter St. John, who appears then to have retired from public life altogether.

The parliament in which the young Henry St. John succeeded his father Henry, in the borough of Wootton Bassett, was the fifth of William's reign. The old parliament, after a prorogation from the previous May, was dissolved on the 19th of December, 1700, and the new parliament was summoned for the 6th of February, 1701. A strange and eventful session was expected.

CHAPTER II.

1688—1701.

ENGLAND AND HER STATESMEN WHEN ST. JOHN ENTERED PARLIAMENT.

A REVOLUTION like that which England had begun in 1688, and was then slowly endeavouring to establish in full security, excites more admiration and enthusiasm when contemplated in the distance than when examined closely in detail. The nearer it is looked upon, the more we are struck with the pettiness of the means in comparison with the greatness of the end. The leading actors in the great national drama, instead of being elevated by the important parts they played, seem to become dwarfed into insignificance. Patriotism was at a low ebb; party spirit was at its height; and the stern moralist, disgusted at all that he saw, might, as in the times of old, have been compelled mournfully to admit that there were not ten honest men to be found. A few general observations on the character of the leading public men may render the subsequent narrative more intelligible.

The first figure that strikes the eye is, of course, King William himself. The greatness of his character may be enthusiastically acknowledged; and yet it is impossible to deny that many of the evils which followed

from that Revolution, and brought the new monarchy into the greatest danger, were frequently the result of his own conduct. There have been princes, of whom the greatest claim to the gratitude of the people whose destinies had been intrusted to their care has consisted in the fact that, while foreigners themselves, they had identified themselves with the people they undertook to rule, and have governed pre-eminently as native sovereigns. With all her faults, this glory has been justly attributed to Catherine of Russia. A similar tribute can never be given to William. His mother was an English princess; he was himself married to an English princess; from his early manhood he had been closely connected with English affairs, and yet he never appears to have taken the slightest pains to really understand or humour the English character. A foreigner he came to England, and a foreigner he remained. His attachment to his native Holland has been represented as a very amiable feature in his character; but as a great man, called upon to play a great part in the history of the world, it by no means increases our estimate of his wisdom and magnanimity. Far-sighted and sagacious as he has been considered, and as in some respects he undoubtedly was, he seems never to have rightly comprehended the immense importance to the whole combined world of that great Revolution which had placed the English crown upon his head. After the landing of the Prince of Orange at Torbay, the work of the Dutch Republic was done. Notwithstanding all the wars of William, Holland, in the eighteenth century, gradually sunk into comparative insignificance, from which there was no prospect of her ever again emerging to play the part of a state of the first rank. This, however, the

Prince of Orange seems never to have foreseen. He never understood that, had it not been for the English Revolution, his renown would have been but transient in the world's history. He disclaimed to admit that he owed anything to England, even glory; and yet it was England that established his glory in undying lustre. The King of England was, in his estimation, always second to that of the Stadtholder of Holland. After the death of Mary, when he felt himself, year by year, more nearly approaching the tomb, it may well be doubted whether he cared very much for the permanence of the Revolution, or was very anxious that the Act of Settlement should be carried out. It is certain that in the Treaty of Ryswick, he contented himself with having his own title to the crown acknowledged, but said nothing at all about his successors, and especially about the rights of the Princess Anne; and so great was his dislike of this lady, that, could the Parliament have been induced to consent to it, and proper guarantees have been given by the French for the security and independence of Holland, he would have troubled himself very little at the prospect of the ultimate succession of her brother. Had such a result been brought about, the great lesson which the Revolution had taught to nations and sovereigns, and the mighty principle of popular government it had asserted, must have been gradually effaced. But the supineness, if not absolute indifference, which William showed on this vital matter, indicates clearly how little the cause of the Revolution, as a cause, and the interests of England, where they seemed not to affect the interests of Holland, entered into his consideration.

When William was himself so lukewarm on the

subject, it is not surprising if Englishmen of high rank, even among those who sat at his council board, administered the public offices, and commanded his fleet, desponded as to the permanent victory of freedom, and endeavoured to provide for future contingencies. In extenuation of the baseness, ingratitude, and falsehood, of some of these men, little indeed can be said; but there were others not without some excuse for their time-serving and double-dealing. On the coronation of William and Mary in Westminster Abbey, the most zealous Whigs were surprised at the success of their own work. The Tories, anxious for the safety of the church, had for the moment co-operated with their opponents: but they had throughout been the reluctant agents of the Revolution; and few of them, until it was out of their power to prevent it, had contemplated the possibility of William being, in direct contradiction to all their political principles, seated on the British throne. Even then the great majority felt sure, that whatever might be the temporary success of the Revolution, the triumph would be but transient. They called to mind the restoration of Charles II. by the free consent of the people, notwithstanding all the victories of Cromwell, and the long years of deadly hostility between the Roundheads and the Cavaliers. What had occurred before within the memory of one generation might surely occur again. The Whigs, too, had many misgivings, not as to the soundness of their political principles, or to the justice of their cause, but as to the permanency of the new establishment. They knew that they were a minority in the nation; that the populace, ignorant, brutal, and besotted, were little inclined to regulate their lives by the precepts of the Church of England, but were always ready, under the

influence of a factious clergy, to shout and riot in favour of the establishment. The king studiously neglected all the arts of popularity, and seemed desirous, by his cold, dry, and unprepossessing manners, to make the people repent of the choice they had made. The Revolution had not been done in a corner. All Europe had regarded it with surprise and astonishment. To expel a king and to set up another in his place were events which had not yet entered into the calculation of politicians on the Continent. The whole affair was looked upon, even by those who found their advantage in it, and possibly even by William himself, as a novelty, something very abnormal, extravagantly out of rule. No wonder, then, that the statesmen of the Revolution were disheartened, and that some of those who had staked the most deeply on its success felt inclined to play a cautious game. They served William, in general, zealously, and they certainly were far from desirous of the return of the Stuarts; but they were drawn into correspondence with the Court of St. Germains, that they might be safe in any event. In most of them the crime arose from mere faint-heartedness; and this weakness they shared with the nation during some of the trying years of William's reign.

In the Whig party, there was, however, one man who had gradually risen to unquestioned supremacy, and who, after having for some time been the object of the keenest attacks of those who disliked William and the Revolution, had just been dismissed from office, but who, as a statesman, stood almost alone as the representative of pure, inflexible patriotism, amid the time-serving lukewarmness and treachery which encompassed William's throne. The obligations we owe to Somers render us anxious to enter into the spirit of

his life; but after reading the panegyrics of his friends, and the invectives of his foes, we still find the information we have about him to be very scanty. The great statesman and jurist remains to us a mythical personage. He was unquestionably the founder of the Whig party as it existed for the first half of the last century; his successors of the next generation, including Walpole, were proud of being regarded as his pupils. His fine temper, always under control, his attachment to the constitution, his habitual moderation, his wisdom, his foresight, rendered him the noblest counsellor ever possessed by any party. His political enemies mentioned him at once with fear and respect. Other men might make louder professions; other men might stand more prominently before the public; but no man knew so well the political requirements of his age, or acted more steadily up to that knowledge. The plans which brought the Whigs into power were always of his contriving. His blows at their enemies, if delayed, were unerring.

Charles Montague, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, was only second to Somers in the councils of the Whigs. His nature was more worldly; his principles less decided; his statesmanship less profound. He, too, had taken no inconsiderable part in permanently establishing the new government, by his successful schemes to call into existence that vast machine of public credit, which, after being for two generations derided by the discontented Jacobites and ignorant Tories, grew to be the wonder and admiration of the world. He was the great master of modern finance. The national debt was considered his work; and was long regarded by Bolingbroke and those whom he taught, as pregnant with inevitable ruin, and as

the special opprobrium of the Whig party, until the American war, and the French Revolutionary war, when the Tories were in power, increased the debt to its present gigantic proportions, at which those Whigs who were accused of introducing the system, would have stood aghast. Other two politicians, with Somers and Montague, composed the celebrated Whig junto. One of these was the Earl of Wharton, an immoral man, indeed, but no hypocrite, and, therefore, not so immoral as men professing to be champions of the church, and leading lives quite as profligate. The other was Lord Orford, the Admiral Russell of the battle of La Hogue. If Wharton was, as Swift called him, the defiler of altars, he at least never declared that he respected them, and even he appears to have been scandalized at the reverend author of The Tale of a Tub. Forgetting the name he bore, and the political principles in which he almost fanatically believed, Russell had condescended to the meanest intrigues with St. Germains. In many respects this man was one of the most hateful characters of that age.

But the hatred of both the admirers of William and the sympathizers with the Stuarts has been concentrated on a far greater Englishman. That Marlborough, when candidly judged by the standard of his contemporaries, was really a worse man than the great majority of the eminent men of that age, it would be somewhat difficult to prove. It would be a much easier task to show that he was, in fact, superior to nearly all who then acted on the public stage. It is not every day that we can expect to find the virtues of Somers; but it does not seem absolutely necessary, in order that King William's character may stand out in heroic magnitude, that Marlborough should be studiously

depreciated and blackened. William was jealous, and even, as his eloquent panegyrist, Macaulay, acknowledges, afraid of Marlborough; and the historian assiduously cultivates the same prejudices, feeling ludicrously that, unless every time the great English general was mentioned, some shameful epithet were not coupled with his name, King William's reputation might lose something. Invectives such as Swift shrunk from indulging in, when it was the object of his employers, Harley and St. John, to assail Marlborough in every possible way, as they were meditating to withdraw him from the command of his victorious army, are deliberately employed against the illustrious Englishman by the great modern historian, and considered by him to be impartial history.

Now what, after all, is the good and evil we know of Marlborough? He was an uneducated youth, brought up in the court of Charles II. The indulgence which we are called upon to make for all who in their early years breathed such a tainted atmosphere, requires justly to be made in an especial degree for one who was so poor, who was the dependent of his sister's paramour, and who could only hope to rise through the means of the court. Yet from many of the vices of that age and that place Churchill was singularly free. He was not a debauchée; he was not a gambler; he was not a drunkard. His intrigue with the profligate Duchess of Cleveland, however disgraceful to her, was one for which a youth exposed to such temptation could scarcely be severely blamed. It has been scornfully said that he had hoarded the money which the Duchess bestowed upon him: had he spent it in every sort of wild prodigality and dissipation he would not have been considered censurable. His prudence

has been regarded as his crime. The fact is that he had felt the curse of poverty; the early chill had curdled his blood; he could never get the sensation from out of his veins, or the horror of it from out of his mind. Yet, avaricious and interested as he has been called, he married early, and he married a woman with scarcely a penny for her fortune. It has been said that he must have been enamoured indeed. But this is no explanation. With the theory of absolute selfishness and black-hearted villany a purely love-match is totally incompatible: such a being as Marlborough has been painted never could have loved disinterestedly, and devotedly. When Queen Elizabeth wished Shakspeare to delineate Falstaff in love, the great dramatist knew it would have been absurd to have made him profess a really ardent passion, since it would have been contrary to the utter selfishness of the knight's character; he therefore depicted Falstaff as making love to Mistress Page and Mistress Ford with the object of acquiring some of their husbands' money-bags. It is not too much to expect from those who write history some degree of that consistency in the delineation of human character that is imperative in a dramatist. Men are not at once Tartuffes and Romeos, scheming egotists and romantic lovers.

But this is not the only inconsistency in which those who have represented Marlborough as an embodiment of the principle of all evil find themselves involved. When James was on the throne, and those who sought his favour, including Sunderland, were eager to abjure their Protestantism and profess themselves Roman Catholics, Marlborough steadily refused to apostasise from his religion, and declared his firm attachment to the Church of England. How strange, it has been

remarked, that there was this one point on which the most callous of mankind was scrupulous! Very strange indeed on the theory which would make Marlborough synonymous with Satan; but not at all strange on another: on the supposition that Marlborough was not a personified abstraction of guilt and infamy, but a man of some decided convictions, with some generous impulses, exposed to strong temptations, and frequently acting wrong where it was hard for any one to act right. Even his treachery to James II., however indefensible, acted most beneficially for England. Had he stood firm by the cause of the unfortunate Catholic sovereign, there must have been bloodshed; and a collision between the Dutch and English armies would, though William had been victorious, have been most disastrous to the cause of the Revolution. But would William have been victorious? Nothing is more certain than that William, with all his great qualities, was, as a general, immeasurably inferior to Marlborough. Most ungrateful it is in those who admire William so highly to blame Marlborough for that act of military desertion which alone rendered the course of the Revolution prosperous. We might almost imagine the English general conscious of the services he had rendered England at that critical hour, turning to the Dutch deliverer, and saying proudly, "To me the obloquy, and to you the glory!"

But, observes Hume, it demanded ever afterwards conduct of the most unswerving rectitude to justify so extreme and questionable a step as this desertion of James. Now Marlborough is soon afterwards, with other public men, found in correspondence with St. Germains, and even appears to have drawn the Princess Anne into the same intrigues. But when nearly all

the rest of the world began to despair of the Revolution, and to think a restoration not only probable, but imminent, it is not so very wonderful that Marlborough should also have desponded and been desirous of securing himself against an event which seemed so likely to occur. That he really wished to see such a restoration, or that, if the mere lifting of his finger could have put his old master back on the British throne, he would have raised that finger, there is not the slightest reason to believe; but he really ran a greater risk in the possibility of the return of the exiled sovereign than any other Englishman. He alone had been marked out for retributive vengeance by the unhappy monarch. For others there might be pardon, but not for Churchill, whom James had raised so high, and who, with an unseen hand, had struck so fatal a blow. As he thus, without sharing in any corresponding degree in the glory, had a greater stake depending on the success of the Revolution than any other Englishman, he was naturally most desirous to provide for his security if James should be restored.

To provide for his own safety, whatever might occur, was therefore the great inducement to Marlborough in endeavouring to re-establish friendly relations with James. The exiled court knowing well that this was mere precautionary temporising, demanded some decided and unequivocal proof of Marlborough's adhesion to their cause. Hence he was compelled to give information about the secret expedition to Brest, which cost the lives of General Mackay and many brave English soldiers. This has been considered the greatest of all Marlborough's crimes. There is, indeed, little to be said for it but this: that had the expedition sailed at the time expected, Marlborough's intelligence

would have arrived too late; that he could not have foreseen this delay; and that therefore half the special pleading by which it has been sought to show that King William signed the despatch giving up the M'Ians to wholesale slaughter without having read it; and that to extirpate a gang of thieves was justifiable language as applied to a Highland chieftain and his followers, who only did what their fathers for generations had done before them, and which had never before ranked them with the offscourings of the creation, either in their own or the public estimation, might easily prove that Marlborough, when sore pressed, gave as little information to the exiled king as he really could; that he gave it in such a manner that, had it not been for purely accidental causes, it would have been of no use at all; and that his sole object was, while endeavouring to do as little harm as possible, to keep up appearances with James.

That Marlborough was for many years on bad terms with William, and that he considered Portland a wooden-headed fellow, cannot be denied. Here was an Englishman conscious of supreme talent for military command, seeing the military forces of England entirely subjected to a knot of foreigners, battle after battle lost by the king on the Continent, torrents of blood shed in the field, and no adequate result obtained. Marlborough himself might have risen by favouritism, but his was not the mere favouritism of a Carr or Villiers. His genius for war had been observed even in the very glance of his eye. In the subordinate commands, such as at the reduction of Cork and Kinsale, he had amply justified the confidence of those who expected that he would one day do something great. When at last he was made the captain-general

of a joint confederacy, though royal favour may have contributed to place him in the position he at last tardily occupied, he was the one Englishman qualified at that time to perform those arduous duties with success; by his unrivalled talents both as a diplomatist and a general he was emphatically the man of the situation.

Bolingbroke, though for years engaged in such deep political hostility against Marlborough, whenever his party requirements were not concerned, took every opportunity of expressing his admiration of the great general. In his later writings he has spoken of him with more enthusiasm than of any of his contemporaries. "He, a new, a private man, a subject, acquired by merit and management, a more deciding influence than high birth, confirmed authority, and even the crown of Great Britain, had given to King William. Not only all the parts of that vast machine, the grand alliance, were kept more compact and entire, but a more rapid and vigorous motion was given to the whole: and instead of languishing or disastrous campaigns, we saw every scene of the war full of action. All those wherein he appeared, and many of those wherein he was not then an actor, but abettor, however, of their action, were crowned with the most triumphant success. I take with pleasure this opportunity of doing justice to that great man, whose faults I knew, whose virtues I admired, and whose memory, as the greatest general and as the greatest minister that our country, or perhaps any other, has produced, I honour."*

On the Continent, while William was in command, we lost every battle we fought. Under Marlborough

* Eighth Letter on the Study of History.

every battle was a victory to the English arms. Allowing Marlborough to have had human feelings, when during so much of the reign of William he was allowed to remain in disgrace, his conduct is sufficiently accounted for; and the plot to expel the foreigners by the aid of the Parliament, which Macaulay, on the most slender materials, or on no real materials at all, so laboriously endeavours to construct, in order that the conduct of the king to Marlborough may be vindicated, was, even if a fact, really nothing so very monstrous. The Englishman only sought, at the most, to do what he had a perfect right to do; he, of all men, with his great powers, had the best right to resent the dominion of a foreign favourite like Portland, and the foreign generals who during the war were intrusted with such high commands.

This war terminated with the peace of Ryswick, which the brilliant historian, anxious for dramatic effect, labours hard to represent as a great triumph for William. And yet what was there in the peace of which an Englishman could by any possibility be proud? After so much English treasure had been expended, and so much English blood shed on the field of battle, all that England acquired was the barren acknowledgment of William's title to the crown by the French king. Surely no such wonderful achievement. To represent all Englishmen as rejoicing in the acknowledgment of William as the sovereign by Louis, is to make his right to the throne almost dependent on the consent of a King of France; and of how little importance Louis considered the mere verbal phrases in the treaty of Ryswick, he soon afterwards signally proved when, even while William was yet living, he acknowledged, on the death of James II., his eldest son

as King of England. The peace of Ryswick was, in fact, no peace. It was a mere suspension of hostilities; a temporary truce, during which the fire burst only the more keenly under the ashes by which it had been covered. Not one element of discord between nations did the peace of Ryswick remove. A formidable confederacy was leagued against France: this league Louis XIV., by his seeming moderation at Ryswick, successfully dissolved; while the great object he had before his eyes, the inheritance of the Spanish monarchy, then daily growing more imminent, seemed only more certainly to become his destined prize. Nothing was done, nothing was said at Ryswick for the great and inevitable contingency of the Spanish succession.

How well the French king had calculated soon became evident. The political dissensions in England increased: as Lord Somers said, a deadness of public spirit seemed to affect the whole nation. With the King of Spain evidently on the verge of the tomb, and a great disturbance in the balance of power impending throughout Europe, William was obliged to disband that noble army which, even amid defeat and disaster, had at Landen and at Namur learnt to endure with heroic constancy. In this great crisis seven thousand men formed all the military force which the provident legislators of England deemed necessary to defend her shores from foreign invasion, and to protect her interests throughout the world.

Since the King of England found himself in no condition to make war, he tried to avert the evils impending over Europe by the celebrated Partition Treaties. Their best defence consists in the King's situation; incapable, through the perversity of the English par-

liament, of providing any other manner against the troubles that were coming upon Europe; deprived in that supreme moment of the means to assert his legitimate influence as a British sovereign, at the head of a high-spirited and devoted people. In every other respect it must be confessed that those stipulations were totally indefensible.

Little indeed can be said for a treaty which, being drawn up to prevent a particular contingency, in fact produced the very result against which it was intended to guard. Whether Louis XIV. ever was sincere in the negotiations is a question open to the gravest doubt; it is certain that, knowing that those engagements would be perfectly binding on England and Holland, and prevent William from forming a further alliance against France, the French monarch was fully conscious they left himself free, to act upon them or repudiate them as circumstances might arise. Feeling the weight of this consideration, and seeing the event clearly before us, it is difficult to believe that William acted with his usual judgment. We might almost suspect that, though vanity was certainly not one of his ruling passions, he was dazzled by negotiating, apparently on equal terms, with his inveterate enemy, that august sovereign who had long affected to despise him, and aspired to give the law to every court in Europe, Ostentation may sometimes be a virtue, but as Portland resolutely kept silent on the subject of the Spanish succession until he was first spoken to by the French minister, and as he carried with him no particular instructions on the matter, it is hard to understand the object of this Dutch favourite's expensive mission to France, with his pompous retinue of English noblemen; though it was during this embassy

that the negotiations about the Partition Treaties were begun.

Portland and Heinsius were, in fact, the only two persons whom William can be said to have consulted at all during the progress of this important business, and until it was all but concluded. Both were foreigners. It is easy to say that they possessed the King's confidence in a measure which he could not bestow on any of his English subjects; but surely there were in the government at that time one or two Englishmen who had a right to be consulted on a question in which the interests and honour of England were so deeply concerned.

The utter indifference which William showed to the sentiments of the English people on this great question accounts for much of the unpopularity with which the treaties were received. Graver objections were certainly never made to any compacts than can be urged against the Partition Treaties. Even though it be granted that the difference between the partition of Poland and the projected partition of the Spanish monarchy consisted in the fact that Poland was a nation, while the empire which obeyed the nominal rule of the imbecile Charles II. of Spain, was an agglomeration of the most discordant elements, still the secret confederacy of three powers to divide the dominion of another, without either the consent or knowledge of the people immediately concerned, formed a precedent which ambitious kings and courtly diplomatists were only too ready to follow. They might begin with partitioning a heterogeneous empire, but they would surely not end there. Imperial ambition is not like to be stopped by the consideration whether the spoils on which its heart is set are part of a torpid

monarchy without a political cohesion, or part of a homogeneous nation full of heart and soul. This metaphysical question of nationality is one on which the masters of a thousand legions will certainly decline to enter. With them, when the principle of spoliation is once set up by a partition treaty, a nation will be considered merely a territorial phrase, and the living and the dead be equally the objects of their unscrupulous rapacity.

The indignation of the great majority of the English people, when they learnt to what documents the Great Seal of their country had been affixed, was a right feeling; but their rage was most unfairly directed. The effect was to destroy what little authority remained to Lord Somers and his colleagues, who formed the first Whig ministry. Parliament was now divided into the court and country party. The great statesman of the Revolution struggled vainly against a hostile majority composed of Jacobite Tories, discontented Whigs, and patriots whose love of freedom and aversion to authority, both in political and ecclesiastical matters, tended to the verge of republicanism. The House of Commons daily became more impracticable. In the year 1700, the Whig junto, bearing the blame of the Partition Treaties, on which they had not been really consulted, and of which they in their hearts disapproved, had lost all control over the legislature. In the House of Commons the Tories and their allies had a decided majority, which they were prepared to use for the most factious purposes. The great object of their attack was the Chancellor, John Lord Somers, who was, in fact, the personal representative of the principles of the Revolution, whose genius could not but be admired, and his virtues respected, but whose

mildness of temper, steadiness of purpose, and sagacity of view were at once dreaded and hated by all the enemies of William, and the government he had established. To avoid receiving an address from the discontented Commons, requesting him to remove Lord Somers from his councils for ever, the King, on the 23rd of May, prorogued the Parliament.

There was, however, but one alternative. If there was to be any harmony between the sovereign and the House of Commons, it was at length obvious to everybodybody that a change must be made. Lord Somers was dismissed, and in the course of the summer and autumn a Tory ministry was gradually formed. Godolphin was made first commissioner to the Treasury, Lord Tankerville the Privy Seal, Sir Charles Hedges a Secretary of State. These appointments were all made in opposition to the interests of the Whigs, who were heart and soul in favour of the Revolution principles, and the Protestant succession.

It soon appeared that this succession was, however, threatened by still greater danger than the establishment in office of a government supposed to be lukewarm if not averse to the disinheritance of the son of the exiled Catholic king. By the death of the young Duke of Gloucester, the only surviving child of the Princess Anne, the provisions of the Act of Settlement were nullified, and England was without an heir. One danger pressed fast upon another. The great obstacle to the succession of the Prince of Wales, as the Jacobites considered, had scarcely been removed by the hand of Providence, when Charles II. of Spain at last died, and Louis XIV. accepted the will which had been made in favour of his grandson, the Duke of Anjou. Without scruple or shame, the French

monarch repudiated the second Partition Treaty, which by everything that his conscience held sacred he had sworn to carry out. A prince of the House of Bourbon succeeded to the Spanish throne, with as little trouble as though no solemn renunciations had been made, no treaties been signed, no engagement undertaken, and with neither enemies nor rivals ready to dispute with him the possession of so rich a prize.

King William's statesmanship was at fault. He felt himself powerless. The parliament was dissolved on the 19th of December, and the new parliament summoned for the 6th of February, 1701. The Tories still possessed an unquestionable majority. St. John, on this occasion, as member for Wootton Bassett, first entered the House of Commons. The good ship was struggling for port. Would the Protestant dynasty be at last firmly seated on the throne, and the liberties of England be securely established? Or would there be another Restoration, to be followed by another tyranny, and the struggles and aspirations of so many patriotic Englishmen found, after all, to have been in vain?

CHAPTER III.

1701—1704.

THE YOUNG MEMBER.

This parliament, which first saw St. John a member of the House of Commons, after meeting accordingly to the royal proclamation on the 6th of February, was prorogued to the 10th. It was said that the Whigs were decidedly outnumbered, and that, according to every probability, the Tories would have it all their own way. Nor were these expectations deceived. Sir Thomas Lyttelton, the Speaker in former parliaments, now, by the desire of the king, even declined a contest, and Robert Harley was for the first time chosen to occupy the chair. He had been previously, when Godolphin was again appointed to the head of the Treasury, fixed upon to manage the House of Commons; and he was thus selected to perform what in our days appear to be the two very incompatible duties of the Speaker of the House of Commons and leader of the ministry.

The choice was, on the whole, the best that the circumstances admitted. Harley combined in his person all the incongruous elements of which the country party had long been composed, and under the com-

bined attacks of which the Whigs had at length been driven from office. He was descended from a Presbyterian family of the strictest kind, and at the Revolution both his father and himself had evinced the most uncompromising devotion to the extreme tenets of their party. According to their views, courts, governments, and kings only existed to be opposed. It was the duty of a good patriot to take a side contrary to that of the sovereign. This was the spirit into which the old Puritanism of the Commonwealth had merged; and of this spirit the Harleys were, perhaps, the most striking examples. It seems a paradox to say that Robert Harley became a Tory and a High Churchman because he had been almost a Puritan and a Republican, and yet such was the fact. Always voting in opposition to William and his government, Harley naturally found himself in divisions allied with Tories and Jacobites, while he secured to himself the confidence of the Dissenters, and to the last, on some occasions, affected a kind of scriptural phraseology, familiar enough to the members who composed Barebones' parliament, but somewhat obsolete in the days of Somers and Addison. To knit together such opposite sections as the Tories and the Presbyterians, to make them, while agreeing in so little else, join in a common admiration of himself, and to win the confidence of their political leaders, seemed a rare and masterly achievement for a politician. At this time Harley therefore naturally obtained great credit for the depths of his designs. He looked wise. There was a mystery and reserve in his manner which made the superficial observer think that much lay beneath the surface. He loved to talk over claret with wits and poets, and his daily potations were not moderate.

But in business, though he might be hesitating, dilatory, and vacillating, he was all solemnity. It seemed impossible to doubt the wisdom and foresight of that grave exterior; and especially, when, as St. John, in taking his seat for Wootton Bassett, first saw it equipped in the speaker's wig and gown.

St. John's father and grandfather, if not as they have been represented, strongly imbued with the spirit of the Presbyterians, had at least been on the popular side. Through three reigns they had been the consistent supporters of the friends of constitutional government, and might fairly be considered Whigs, though they leant to the independent section of the party. Some of the enemies of St. John afterwards reproached him with beginning his public life as a Whig, and afterwards deserting to the Tories. But this charge cannot be sustained. A kind of party consistency during the reigns of William and Anne cannot be denied to St. John. There is nothing known of him inconsistent with his own allegation: "In the first essays I made in public affairs, I acted the part of a Tory."*

From the first he attached himself to Harley. For this alliance there may have been family reasons, sufficient at least to excuse the step to St. John's father and grandfather, who, perhaps, remembered that Harley was once a kind of model independent member, the oracle of the Dissenters, and, like themselves, a hereditary representative of the Presbyterians. It was only during the last two parliaments that Harley's championship of the Church of England had been strongly displayed, and wishing, as his policy was, to stand well both with his new allies and his old friends,

* Letter to Sir William Windham.

he could scarcely as yet be pronounced a decided Tory.

To St. John this union probably had other recommendations. The Whigs, led by chiefs who had risen to the highest eminence, and who ruled their party with absolute authority, were little disposed to look favourably on a young member, for whom, whatever might be his abilities, they had no vacancy in their upper ranks. Besides, they were in a minority, and so strong were the prejudices against their leaders, that it seemed they might be for many years hopelessly excluded from power. Harley had acquired the influence which they had lost. He was at the head of a large majority in the House of Commons; he was surrounded with no proud and haughty colleagues, who, conscious of their great services to the State, looked down almost superciliously on the rising talents of their party. It was a great satisfaction to a young and ambitious man, who looked with St. John's eyes, that there was at least no Tory junto. What could such a man, who wished to rise speedily and to rise highly, do better than to become Harley's lieutenant? Harley's lieutenant St. John soon eagerly aspired to be.

It was not altogether so easy a task to accomplish as might at first be supposed. Harley, in a dissolute age, was considered a moral man: he attended neither races nor cock-fights, kept no race-horses, neither laid wagers, nor dissipated his fortune at cards or with the dice-box. If he did after dinner sit too long over his bottle, and was, when he had lost his sovereign's favour, accused of going drunk into her presence,* this failing was common with nearly all

* Erasmus Lewis to Swift, July 27, 1714.

his generation, including, in some measure, the refined and virtuous Addison, and could then scarcely be thought very blamable. But on the glaring vices of the young patricians of his time, Harley looked down with absolute disgust; and of all the young patricians who either sought his favour or laughed at his priggishness, St. John had won for himself the reputation of being the most shameless and abandoned profligate.*

To throw himself heartily into the ranks of the prevailing party, and to go all lengths with them in their furious championship of the Church and their violent persecution of all who dissented from their political and religious prejudices, seemed the sure and easy road to acquire the favour of Harley and the confidence of his supporters. St. John pursued no middle path. The descendant of the moderate Sir Walter St. John and the pious Johanna became at once a Tory of the Tories: licentious as was his life, and tainted as his mind was with the fashionable Hobbism which was then openly professed by all the dissipated people of fashion as an excuse for their licentiousness, he became a High Churchman, and on every division swelled the ranks of the country squires, who regarded all Dissenters as unworthy to enjoy the privileges of English citizens.

Party-spirit ran high, and young St. John, eager, ambitious, unscrupulous, became at once one of the most violent of partisans. The new parliament, which proceeded to business after the short prorogation from the 6th to the 10th of February, afforded abundant

* For the favourable side of Harley's character, see particularly the Examiner, No. 26, written by Swift; his History of the Last Four Years of the Queen; and The Enquiry into the Behaviour of the Queen's Last Ministry.

opportunities to indiscriminate party zeal. It was, on the whole, the very worst of William's parliaments, and perhaps the most factious, the most arbitrary, and the least patriotic that has ever legislated for England since the Revolution. The national honour, the rights of their constituents, the liberties of individuals, all that is upright and august in the proceedings of great representative bodies were flagrantly disregarded by the popular assembly in which St. John first won for himself a name; and in the least defensible acts of this disgraceful House of Commons he was a zealous participator. He had chosen his side, and he was not a man to hesitate, to reflect, to be lukewarm, or to do anything by halves.

On the first sight of the House it was evident to the most inexperienced that the Tories possessed a great majority; their benches were crowded with rubicund fox-hunters, while the Whig ranks were perceptibly thinned. A great many louis-d'ors were passing from hand to hand, and it was strongly suspected that many members had actually received bribes from the French ambassador.* Had Louis himself nominated the majority they could not on many occasions have acted with more entire devotion to his interests than in some of the votes of this stormy session.

On the disputed elections, of course, there was no pretence of impartiality: every question was decided against the Whigs by the prevailing majority. During the recent contest the old East India Company and the new East India Company had lavishly bribed against each other; but the patrons of the old Company were now in power, while the supporters of

* Burnet, 462. Ed. Oxford, 1823.

Montague's recent creation were almost helpless. Every question was carried against the directors of the new establishment. Even Sir Edward Seymour, whose life had been one long corruption, and who was known to have received bribes from the old corporation, had the shameless effrontery to take the lead in condemning the corrupt practices of the rival institution. While these election battles were being fought, the very words of an address to the throne were settled, requesting William to acknowledge Philip as King of Spain; and the question would certainly have been brought forward had not a sturdy member openly declared that if such a proposition were carried, he expected that the next vote would be to acknowledge the pretended Prince of Wales as the heir to the crown.

Though many of Harley's supporters were in their hearts averse to any settlement of the succession, excluding the direct heir of James II., decency compelled the majority to undertake the business which William had recommended from the throne. To frame the Act of Settlement on the Princess Sophia and the heirs of her body, being Protestants, was the first and imperative duty which demanded the attention of the legislature. To the very reluctance with which the majority set about their task we owe some of the most popular provisions of this great constitutional measure. Men who would have stubbornly resisted any attempt to limit the freedom of action in the direct Stuart line, cared not what limitations they introduced against the House of Hanover. Hence the resolutions which bound up the liberties of the people and the Protestant succession to the Crown breathe a spirit of the most sturdy patriotism. The Jacobites

themselves were not unwilling, as against the German dynasty, to establish another Magna Charta and another Bill of Rights. Resolution after resolution was proposed and carried with acclamation, limiting the prerogative in the most essential particulars, prohibiting the future monarch from ever leaving the kingdom without the consent of parliament, excluding all except natural-born subjects from the privy council, from both Houses of Parliament, and from holding any offices under the crown, or accepting any grants from the royal bounty. Any person receiving a pension from the crown was declared to be incapable of sitting in the House of Commons. The judges were to hold their offices during their good behaviour, and to be only removable by the address of both Houses of Parliament. No pardon under the Great Seal was to be pleadable to an impeachment by the House of Commons. Some of the provisions, so jealously made, were cancelled; others were found to be totally impracticable, and were subsequently either virtually or directly repealed. Bolingbroke himself confessed how reluctantly his party were prevailed upon, to agree to the great principle of the measure, that of settling the crown in the succession of the House of Hanover,* and every patriotic resolution was greedily seized upon as a pretext for delay.

The voice of the young senator was frequently and powerfully exerted in the debates upon this important measure. Whatever Harley and his majority proposed, St. John was ready to support. Young and inexperienced as he was, so well did he vindicate his pretensions to be regarded as one of the rising spirits of the party, that when, in accordance with the resolu-

* State of Parties at the Accession of George the First.

tions which had been passed, the Bill for the Further Security of the Protestant Succession was to be introduced in the month of May, he was the member who, by order of the House, was appointed, with the Secretary of State, Sir Charles Hedges, to prepare and bring in the measure. Many years afterwards he was accused of having, with the disaffected Tories, attempted to throw out this very bill; but he triumphantly appealed to the journals of the Commons, and this allegation respecting his conduct with regard to the Act of Settlement in 1701 was certainly without any real foundation.*

Unfortunately, there were made against his conduct during this his first session in parliament other accusations which were not so easy to answer. It was not thought sufficient by the Tories to secure the triumph of their party; they were resolved to trample on their vanquished adversaries. The Duke of Portland, Lord Somers, Charles Montague, who had recently been created Lord Halifax, and the Earl of Orford, who had been the idol of the nation, and as Admiral Russell, the hero of La Hogue, were successively impeached. The principal article of charge was their negotiation of the Partition Treaties, though nothing was more certain than that if misconduct there had been in carrying on these important negotiations without consulting parliament, the king, who was known to be his own foreign minister, had been the main offender. According to the sound constitutional doctrine, the ministers were indeed to be held responsible, while the king was not; but there is no rule without an ex-

* See Journals of the House of Commons of May, 1701. See also the Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication, with Bolingbroke's Final Answer to the Remarks.

ception, and the reign of William, with his peculiar character and his masterly knowledge of foreign affairs, was altogether exceptional. Somers and one or two of his colleagues had, indeed, at the last moment, when everything was arranged, been called upon to give their ministerial sanction to stipulations of which they had previously known nothing; but the great Whig statesman most unanswerably urged, that in the critical state of Europe, with the king of Spain's life hanging by a thread, he could not take upon himself the serious task of thwarting arrangements which William, the mortal foe of Louis and of France, thought best for the interests of England and of Europe. Somers was heard at the bar of the House of Commons, and so complete was his defence, that had the decision been immediately taken, it was generally acknowledged he would have been acquitted. But the malice and rancour of his accusers were allowed time to recover themselves; and the resolution for his impeachment was carried. This was easy. It was not, however, so easy, after voting Somers and the other Whig lords guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors, to frame articles of impeachment which could give even a colourable pretence to justify such grave accusations. Week after week passed away, and at last the factious majority endeavoured most scandalously to supply by authority what they wanted all evidence to support. They sent up an address to the king, requesting him to dismiss the impeached statesmen from his counsels for ever, though they had as yet been found guilty of no crime; and the proceeding was, as the counter-address of the House of Lords most properly asserted, an unprecedented attempt to brand the accused persons previous to their trial. The Lords called upon the

Commons on five different occasions to bring forward their articles. Still they could not be produced. At length the Peers fixed a day for the trial of Somers. The majority in the other House blustered and threatened, but did not appear at Westminster Hall to make good their charges, and the great patriot was most righteously absolved. The impeachments against the other Whig Peers were dismissed, and the Commons had the mortification of suffering a deserved rebuke from the Upper House for attempting to use most unjustly and oppressively those high privileges which had been allotted to them for the punishment of injustice and oppression.

Of those disgraceful measures which were calculated to subvert all justice, and to bring a scandal on the very name of the House of Commons, tradition asserted that young St. John was one of the most decided and intemperate advocates. When he was himself suffering under what he called oppression from a triumphant Whig majority, his violent councils and language against Somers and his friends in this year were recalled to his mind with malignant satisfaction. "You fled from trial, and then complained of being condemned in your absence. You saw nothing unjust in condemning without any trial at all men who had committed no crimes, who had, as their worst enemies confessed, rendered great public services, who were allowed to be as wise and upright as had ever ruled in any age or country. It was nothing for them to plead in their defence the name of King William. You consider it being in excuse of blunders in negotiation, the desertion of allies, and renunciations which were of no value, to plead the name of Queen Anne. You condemned your enemies for acting like a political inqui-

sition; were you not one of the first to recommend a political inquisition? You cried out against strong measures; did you ever recommend mild measures? Is it then only when you feel the smart of a bill of attainder in your own person that you become scrupulous? and were others whose innocence you cannot now dispute to be by you pronounced guilty and punished without scruple or shame?"

Bolingbroke had little to say in reply to these bitter taunts. In his later years he gave up all defence, pleaded his ignorance of the political state of Europe, and acknowledged that himself and the majority, in censuring the Partition Treaties, and those whom they most untruly alleged to have been the authors of them, were entirely wrong. "But, my Lord," he said to Lord Cornbury, "I own it with some shame; because, in truth, nothing could be more absurd than the conduct we held." He became an eloquent defender of those Partition Treaties which have been so long and so loudly condemned. "What!" he wrote, "because we had not reduced the power of France by the war, nor excluded the house of Bourbon from the Spanish succession, nor compounded with her upon it by the peace; and because the house of Austria had not helped herself, nor put it in our power to help her with more advantage and better prospect of success, were we to leave the whole succession open to the invasions of France, and to suffer even the contingency to subsist of seeing those monarchies united? What! because it was become extravagant, after the trials so lately made, to think ourselves any longer engaged by treaty, or obliged by good policy to put the house of Austria in possession of the whole Spanish monarchy, and to defend her in the possession by force of arms, were we

to leave the whole at the mercy of France? If we were not to do so, if we were not to do one of the three things that I before said remained to be done, and if the emperor put it out of our power to do another of them with advantage, were we to put it still more out of our power, and to wait unarmed for the death of the king of Spain? In fine, if we had not the prospect of disputing with France so successfully as we might have had it, the Spanish succession, whenever it should be open; were we not only to show by disarming that we would not dispute it at all, but to censure likewise the second of the three things mentioned above, and which King William put in practice, the compounding with France, to prevent if possible a war in which we were averse to engage?"* These arguments must be taken for what they are worth. If not a conclusive defence of the Partition Treaties, and the manner in which they were negotiated, they are at least a complete censure of the course pursued by Mr. St. John, the young member for Wootton Bassett, in reprobating those political arrangements, and attempting to inflict an ignominious punishment on Somers and his colleagues.

Though the Tory majority was so decided at the beginning of the session, the violence of the House of Commons disgusted the whole nation. Months were spent in angry debates and personal attacks, while the bills of supply were not voted, and the business of the government stood still. The alarm became general throughout the City; even the old East India Company, with the rest of the great civic corporations, saw an immediate prospect of the total ruin of public credit.

* The Eighth Letter on the Study of History, containing the Sketch and State of Europe from the Year 1688.

It was clear that France and Spain were united; that a general war was at hand; and yet that nothing was done to put the country in a state of defence. The grand jury of Kent, and the freeholders of the country assembled at Maidstone, sent up a petition to the House of Commons, in which, after declaring that King William's great actions were written in the hearts of his subjects, and could never without the blackest ingratitude be forgotten, they besought the representatives of the people, in the dangerous state of Europe, to turn their loyal addresses into bills of supply, that his Majesty might be enabled to provide for the public safety before it should be too late. The majority of the House was driven to fury at this remonstrance in the form of a petition. It was voted scandalous, insolent, and seditious, and in direct breach of every constitutional principle, the gentlemen who presented it were ordered into custody. This was the famous Kentish Petition, and its results with which, as with the impeachment of the Whig Lords, Bolingbroke was afterwards keenly reproached. In this unjust proceeding on the side of the tyrannical majority, the voice of the young orator was one of the loudest, his councils the heartiest, and his contempt for the liberties of individuals, in opposition to what he considered the privileges of the House of Commons, most defiant. Unhappily this question was only the first of a long series of similar contentions, in which, while St. John sat in the House of Commons, he was found invariably taking the same violent course; stimulating to the utmost his heated partizans, and on every occasion opposed to the side which is now generally admitted by the greatest authorities to have been that of the English constitution.*

* See in the State Tracts, the able pamphlet entitled Jura Populi Anglicani; or, The Subject Right of Petitioning set Forth. See also, in the Somers'

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The violation of all justice in the person of those who had taken the leading part in presenting the Kentish petition did not abate the violence of the Commons. The angry disputes with the Lords on the impeachment continued into the summer, and gradually became more acrimonious than ever. At length, however, the King, wearied and disgusted, put an end to those incessant altercations by a prorogation: and he privately made up his mind to get rid, at the first opportunity, of a House of Commons which was, beyond all precedent, factious, and reckless of consequences, and which, while bringing into collision the different estates of the realm, supinely neglected to provide against the perils that threatened the world.

Nothing can be said for this House of Commons; but St. John, who had through the session almost succeeded in becoming one of its leading spirits, had at least the excuse of youth and inexperience. He went into parliament, as many young men even in our days go into parliament, without any acquired political knowledge, and without any decided views except to make a speech and to become distinguished. As he confessed, he knew nothing of the state of Europe when he so strongly prosecuted those who had been made responsible for the Partition Treaties, so when he committed to prison those who had presumed to present a petition to the House of Commons, he knew nothing of the British constitution.

Between him and the country squires and the country clergymen with whom he acted, however cordial the alliance might be, there was a wide difference. Many of the Tory gentlemen really cared nothing about what

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Tracts, ii. 242, The History of the Kentish Petition. In the same volume, p. 276, there is, on the other side of the question, a piece, supposed to be written by Harley, called The Vindication of the Right of the Commons.

they did against the principles which the Revolution had established, and the men who had risen to eminence in asserting them, because in their hearts they totally disapproved of those principles, and while attacking the Whig statesmen, really believed that they were attacking the Whig king. They at least had definite opinions, strong prejudices, and positive convictions. They were ready either to drink, fight, or die for the Church of England. James II.'s conduct, if it had not extinguished, had certainly confused their notions of loyalty; but this political complication had only intensified their zeal for the religious establishment. But what St. John wanted in attachment to the Church he could not supply by devotion to the monarchy; for, in fact, though he called himself a Tory, and professed to hate the Whigs, when he came to reason on political affairs, his sentiments were entirely Whiggish. Neither Milton, nor Locke, nor Addison, could have written more strongly against the doctrines of Divine right and passive obedience than Bolingbroke did whenever he glanced over history and examined the principles of English parties.* Even Oliver St. John himself could not have spoken more disrespectfully of the peculiar religion and political tenets which were so highly favoured by Charles I. St. John might abandon the politics of the Puritans and of his family, but do what he would he never could become a Cavalier. Faith was altogether wanting; and what he wanted in faith he strove to make up by blind and intemperate party zeal.

In this endeavour, for the time, he most effectually succeeded. His animal spirits were high; his imagination was active; impulsive by nature, he troubled himself very little with reflections on the future. It was

* See the Letters on History and the Dissertation on Parties, *passim*.

enough to be victorious in the present. He had abandoned himself without a scruple or hesitation to the sweeping stream of licentious passion; and with the same thoughtlessness he was led into the heady current of party politics, careless wheresoever it might carry him, if he was at length to be borne upon it to power.

Few men have begun their political career with more natural advantages. His appearance was eminently in his favour. Tall and graceful in his person, his features were elevated, handsome, and refined; with an aquiline nose, a keen piercing eye, rich brown hair clustering round his brow; a smile singularly sweet and winning; a voice clear and harmonious; a commanding presence and a pleasing address: he seemed the model of a young English patrician, dissolute it might be, but full of intelligence and spirit.

These physical advantages were aided by corresponding intellectual endowments. Nature appeared to have set her heart on making St. John a finished orator; and on hearing him it might be asked in what oratorical qualification he could be pronounced deficient? His elocution was easy and natural; his perception was quick, his language ready; the words flowed from his lips as in a silver stream. Then the charm of his diction was manifold. Picturesque and forcible, without being in the slightest degree stilted, he never indulged in metaphor merely for the sake of metaphor; his illustration rose naturally out of the subject, and instead of merely making his hearers admire his ingenuity, always helped forward his argument. Though florid, he could scarcely be considered artificial; when his diction assumed all the hues of the rainbow, the politician and the man of business were

never altogether forgotten in the rhetorician. As a declaimer, he never perhaps had an equal; and strong declamations being exactly suited to the heated temper of his friends, he indulged this faculty to its utmost extent. He was also a great master of sarcasm. None knew better what to insinuate and what to express; he inflicted wounds which were more than skin deep; and being utterly destitute of self-control, on the excitement of the moment, and amid the rapturous cheers of the Tories, he sometimes said a great deal more than was either necessary or wise. He made many personal enemies whom he inspired with the most deadly animosity: few orators were more feared, and none was more hated.

The account of St. John's oratory has, of course, come down only by tradition. Not a single speech exists which can be said to be anything like a correct report of what he delivered, or to exhibit any fair specimen of his eloquence. That, however, he was a great orator, the universal testimony of his contemporaries, of foes as well as friends, gives us no reason to doubt. It was indeed to his oratory, and indeed to his oratory alone, that he owed his early ascendancy in the senate; for he had none of Harley's management, and no weight but what his brilliant qualities supplied. Paradoxical, however, as it may seem, perhaps Bolingbroke's reputation as an orator is greater because his speeches have perished, than if they had been reported with all the skill and diligence which is now employed in taking down every important word that is spoken in Parliament. Sheridan rightly judged, that the fame of his great Begum speech could not be increased by the most elaborate report, and, therefore, refused, even for a thousand guineas, to prepare a correct copy of it for

the press. Sheridan's eloquence was not of that pure gold which will stand the severest test; it may be well for his fame that we have not the means of judging whether the intrinsic excellence of that celebrated oration, deserved the encomium of the friends who were present when it was delivered in the House of Commons.* And Bolingbroke may have gained something with posterity, even from the very absence of the means of estimating the real excellence of his oratory. The greatest judges have been most enthusiastic on the subject; Lord Brougham, in the Edinburgh Review, and his Sketches of Statesmen, putting him on a niche with the few renowned speakers of all time; and Mr. Pitt, when talking of which of the lost great intellectual treasures he would wish to see recovered, placed before the most renowned compositions of antiquity a speech of Bolingbroke.

It is great presumption on my part to doubt on an oratorical question the correctness of the ideas entertained by such high authorities. I must confess, however, with all due deference to Mr. Pitt, that a speech of Bolingbroke would seem to me but a poor exchange for those lost decades of Livy to which they have been preferred; and that there are many other lost productions, which I should be inclined to regret more highly than St. John's unreported orations in the reign of William and Anne. Had the manuscripts of Bolingbroke's philosophical works been given to the flames, there would have been great expressions of regret from the intellectual world; and yet, although they were

* It may be observed that Sheridan delivered two great speeches on the Begum charge, which are not unfrequently confounded. The oration which created so much admiration was delivered in the House of Commons in 1787; the other was delivered in Westminster Hall, and may now be read accurately reported.

looked for with so much impatience, had they never been published at all, his reputation either as a writer or a philosopher would have lost nothing.

Perhaps if his oratory could be revived, its fate might not be so very dissimilar. Were the brilliant words which St. John was uttering during those years the words of wisdom? would they bear critical investigation? was he proclaiming truths which, though his own age might neglect, future generations would recognize and applaud? By no artifices of diction could the conduct of the majority be justified in the impeachment of Somers, or the imprisonment of those who brought forward the Kentish petition; and yet these and similar proceedings, during much of the time he sat in Parliament, the speeches of St. John, if they could be recovered, would be found frequently defending.

He has himself informed the world, in a celebrated simile, what the office of a great orator was in the House of Commons, and by this illustration we may in some measure estimate the value of his spoken eloquence. "You know the nature of that assembly," he wrote to a friend: "they grow like hounds, fond of the man who shows them game." * This, then, by his own showing, was the manner in which St. John acquired his ascendancy over the majority in the House of Commons; and this was the office which he sat himself to fill. He was a kind of huntsman encouraging a pack of hounds. He had to show them game. He had by his halloo to incite the Tories, to chase and worry Whigs and Dissenters, the directors of the Bank of England, and all who presumed to question the infallibility of the High Church party, and the supremacy of the country squires. This simile, though it has been

* Letter to Sir William Windham.

selected for special panegyric, may be a just representation of the business of a leading politician in the time of Queen Anne; but it certainly does not at all give a just idea of the functions of a great statesman in the happier days of Queen Victoria. It is not the business of a minister of state in our time to encourage his supporters to worry his enemies. He has other duties to perform than that of showing his partizans game. From the moment that he attains power, his object is to conciliate and to convince; to provoke as little opposition as he can; and as far as possible to approach that neutral frontier which separates him from the more moderate of his opponents. A vote of his followers may open to him the doors of office, but from the moment that he crosses the threshhold he is obliged to recognise that, as the responsible servant of his sovereign, he is the minister of the whole nation. The time of St. John was a time of heat and violence; and the rule was to give no quarter to an adversary. St. John's object in an especial degree was to divide rather than to unite, to dwell on what the parties differed rather than on what they agreed, and to blow into a fierce flame all the burning embers of political controversy. But the oratory, however brilliant, which is applied to such a purpose, will gain by being spoken about rather than by being calmly read after the fires of contention have burnt themselves out, and their effects can be calmly contemplated under the peaceful influences of a more settled and tranquil time. It is not such oratory that the wise would prefer to the lost books of Livy, or any other great work, which records facts and contains pictures of real human life and actions, that with its pages must be irretrievably lost for ever.

Neither, though his speeches have not been pre

served, are we altogether without the means of judging, even from his own works, what St. John's oratory really was. His published writings on the political controversies of his time still remain; and they will assist us to form a very correct, and even a favourable estimate of what we have lost. For, more than almost those of any other man who ever wrote, St. John's literary works resemble spoken eloquence. They are clearly the compositions of an orator, who, being prevented from addressing an audience by word of mouth, uses the pen as his instrument, and writes what he would have spoken. To make this resemblance, or rather identity, more complete, we know that Bolingbroke was decidedly averse to the mechanical employment of writing; that he could not bear to sit down, with the paper before him and the pen in his hand, to develop his ideas; that it was his custom to employ an amanuensis, and to dictate many of his literary productions. This habit was evidently formed in the House of Commons; and having learnt to make speeches before he was obliged to confine himself to writing essays, the author was merely a transcript of the orator. His compositions, when examined, fully confirm this idea. Their style is, both in its excellencies and defects, thoroughly oratorical; glowing, animated, vehement, and if never bombastic, frequently declamatory, tautological, and diffuse. Graceful and flowing as Bolingbroke in the best of his writings is, he not unfrequently tires the reader with repetitions and amplifications, to which, when set off by his fine person and pleasing intonations, an audience might always listen with interest and delight. Any one who will sit down and give himself up to the spirit of the Letter to Sir William Windham, and the

Dissertation on Parties, can scarcely fail to form a vivid idea of what St. John's oratory was in the House of Commons. When he wrote, he was addressing an imaginary audience, exciting imaginary cheers, and frequently defying and assailing a hated rival who was not at all imaginary: but whether in youth or age, while St. John was speaking in the House of Commons, or, as Viscount Bolingbroke, composing the letters to the Craftsman, still the same unconquered and unconquerable foe.

A few months before St. John took his seat for Wootton Bassett, his Eton schoolfellow, Robert Walpole, had also entered the House of Commons. Young Robert, like St. John, could boast of being a descendant from an old county family, for the Walpoles had been for centuries well known in Norfolk. Robert's grandfather had been member for Lyme Regis, and his father had sat for Castle Rising as St. John's father had sat for Wootton Bassett. The third son of nineteen children, Robert was, like St. John, but lately married; and having lost his father, he had first succeeded to the family estates, and to the family borough of Castle Rising, which his father had represented for many years. Robert, with his usual prudence, had determined not to open his lips in the House until he had thoroughly grown accustomed to all its ways. But the rapid and brilliant success, as an orator, of St. John, who, as some years younger than himself, he had been inclined to look down upon at Eton, stimulated Walpole's ambition. Political differences had also their share in calling forth this rivalry. While St. John was winning the applause and admiration of the Tories, Walpole was sitting silent and unregarded among the Whigs. To the Whig party, however disastrous as

might apparently be their fortunes at the moment, Robert was determined steadily to adhere. He attempted to address the House; but his manner was ungraceful, he paused for want of words, and could only stutter and stammer. St. John might well triumph: young Mr. Walpole, of Norfolk, at the onset, was considered to have made a failure. Another first speech was made on the same evening with great success and loud applause, and poor Walpole's attempt only appeared the worse by contrast. But the accomplished Arthur Mainwaring thought differently:—"You may," he said, "applaud the one and ridicule the other as much as you please; but the spruce gentleman who made the set speech will never improve, while Mr. Walpole will, in time, become an excellent speaker."*

Mainwaring's opinion was not, however, shared by the majority. What future promise was there in that sturdy, bull-necked, red-faced young member for Castle Rising, who looked like the son of a small farmer, and seemed by his gait as though he had been brought up to follow the plough? Who thought much of Honest Robin, as he became in those days to be familiarly called by his friends, and who blushed when he was spoken to by the great chief of his party, and with his uncouth manners seemed all smiles, rusticity, health, and good-nature?† Who could for a moment consider him a political rival to the brilliant, fanciful, and eloquent Mr. Henry St. John? In the first heyday of youthful success, and even for long afterwards, St. John laughed at the idea of his old schoolfellow from Norfolk ever becoming his competitor. In the

* See Coxe, Walpole, i. 14.

† See the Poems of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

almost incredible event of a race for power between them, it seemed that the unpolished member for Castle Rising would be nowhere.

It was the happiness of Walpole to belong to a party that, amid the stormy conflicts of those days, and all the uncertainties of the future, had fixed principles and decided views. Hence himself and his friends were never placed in a false position. Whatever occurred amid the political exigencies of that time, they always saw their way clearly; when the moment of action came, they never found themselves pausing, perplexed, hesitating, and unresolved. Their watchwords were, the Act of Settlement and the Protestant Succession, which in their most excited moments acted as charms to animate themselves, and to dismay their enemies. Far different was it with St. John and the Tories. They had to invent new devices; to travel in untrodden ways; and at every sudden event, however long it might have been expected, they were brought abruptly to a stand.

During the autumn of 1701, James II. died. Moved by compassion at the death of the exiled king, whom he had visited in his dying hour, and at the urgent inportunities of Madame de Maintenon, who had promised all her influence to the widowed Mary of Modena, Louis XIV., in direct violation of the treaty of Ryswick, acknowledged the eldest son of James as King of England. It was the greatest mistake of the French king's whole reign. The news set all England on fire. The Tories might declaim against foreign wars, national debts, heavy taxes, and standing armies; but their clamour was for the moment drowned in the cry of indignation which rose throughout the kingdom against receiving a sovereign on the nomination of

France. Patriotic addressess were generally sent up to the throne. William saw that Louis had afforded him the opportunity he wanted. He was on the Continent; he rushed to England; he dissolved the parliament; the elections were in general favourable to his policy, and opposed to that which the Tories had advocated. In the new parliament, which met on the 30th of December, their majority was perceptibly diminished.

Still it could not be said, except in the obstacles being removed from the war of the Spanish succession, that the Whigs had gained any party triumph. St. John, evidently with the approbation of his family, was again elected for Wootton Bassett. Though all the influence of the court was employed to procure the appointment of Sir Thomas Lyttelton, Harley was again chosen Speaker. William, in his speech from the throne, expressed his confidence that the members of the new parliament had met together full of the sense of the common danger, and of resentment at the proceedings of the king of France, which had been so loudly expressed in the loyal and seasonable addresses sent up from every part of England. The Tories had no choice but to bend before the storm. The addresses in reply to the royal speech passed unanimously. A Bill was brought in, attainting the Pretender of high treason; a measure which, however, in some respects objectionable, had, in the eyes of the Whigs, the merit of putting on the statute-book a declaration of irreconcilable hostility to the House of Stuart. All the Jacobites, and most of the Tories, disliked the bill; but to resist it was impossible. A still more determined measure was that of imposing the oath of abjuration, and acknowledging William both as the rightful and lawful king. The scruples of

Nottingham and the refining Tories had hitherto been respected; but, by a majority of a single vote, it was now carried that the oath should be imposed on all, and it was declared high treason for any one to attempt to hinder the next heir, according to the Act of Settlement, from succeeding to the crown.

From his conduct on one of the close divisions, on a clause of this bill, St. John, even so early as 1710, and repeatedly during his later life, was accused of really voting against the Protestant succession, and of thus early showing decided Jacobite inclinations. He retorted on his accusers, and attempted to prove that the clause against which he was represented as voting, had not the meaning ascribed to it, and only provided, that in the event of any person who had forfeited an office taking the oath during the time appointed, his successor should not, on this account, lose his place. But Bolingbroke's enemies were not silenced. Technically they admitted that the clause bore his interpretation; but they replied that the real objection of the Tories applied to the second clause, making it high treason to attempt to deprive the successor to the crown of his inheritance; and that though, according to parliamentary rule, the divisions were taken on the clause which stood first in order, it was only after St. John and his friends had been defeated on the previous question they gave up the attempt to divide on the other.* Although this controversy assumed great proportions at one time of Bolingbroke's life, so that he thought it worthy of a direct reply, it has for us little interest. During the whole of his parliamentary career, it

* See the Answer to the London Journal in reference to this accusation and Memoirs of Bolingbroke, 1754, p. 85.

cannot be justly said of St. John, that he showed any decided devotion either to the House of Hanover or the House of Stuart. Some persons would, perhaps, find his character rise in their estimation, if it could be shown that he was at any time in his heart a Jacobite. His greatest reproach as a public-spirited statesman is, that neither for the one cause nor the other does he appear to have had the slightest preference; but that on every occasion he regulated his attachment to both, by momentary considerations of what he thought to be his personal and party interests.

To recompense themselves in some measure for their defeats on those great national questions, St. John and his friends continued their vengeance against Thomas Colepepper, the undertaker, as he was called, of the Kentish Petition. The controversy of the last session was renewed, and the persecution of an unimportant individual exhibited the same painful features. But the great state machine, under the impulse which it had received from the popular indignation at the acknowledgment of the Pretender as King of England, and under the resolute hand of William, although he knew himself to be dying, was moving nobly amid all the party altercations, petty persecutions, and political intrigues of the hour. The Grand Alliance, the special work of the king, had been formed during the preceding year; as the early spring returned, the forces were being organized on the Continent; and Marlborough, at last in favour with William, was sent over to the Netherlands to prepare for the approaching campaign. This great general, now in his proper element, saw that his hour was come, and with the noble instinct of genius, he felt assured of triumph. In the presence of St. John, who afterwards recorded

the circumstance, Marlborough, before setting out for the Continent, said to the friends of whom he was taking leave, that the French would greatly miscalculate if they made the same comparison between their troops and those of their enemies, as they had done in former wars. England and their allies had become disciplined even by their defeats. Their forces, though nominally disbanded, had been speedily called together again; they had to begin the contest with an army of veterans; and Marlborough declared himself confident that England had the materials of victory in her hands.* The truth of his prophecy he was himself abundantly to demonstrate in many a bloody field, wherever his eagle eye and serene countenance were seen directing the storm of war.

But while the new scene was opening, the king, to whom battles had long been life, was sinking into the arm of death. The work of the statesman William had done in forming the Grand Alliance; another hand was to do more successfully than the heroic Dutchman ever could have accomplished it, the work of the soldier. He gasped his last at Kensington, and Anne became Queen of England.

Marlborough was made captain-general of all the Queen's forces by land and sea. Godolphin, who had recently resigned his commissionership of the Treasury, because he disapproved of the approaching struggle, yielded to the importunities of Marlborough, with whom he was now connected by family ties, and became Lord High Treasurer. In the course of the spring and summer, the foundation of the celebrated Godolphin administration was laid, though years were to elapse before it was firmly and efficiently

* See Bolingbroke's Sketch of the History and State of Europe from 1688.

organized. At this time most of the changes were made in favour of the Tories; but the Whigs were not, owing to the moderation of Marlborough and Godolphin, violently driven from office. Prince George was made Lord High Admiral; the Duke of Devonshire was continued Lord Steward; the Earl of Jersey became Lord Chamberlain; the Earl of Bradford, Treasurer; Peregrine Bertie, Vice-Chamberlain; and Sir Edward Seymour, Comptroller of the Household, and a Privy Councillor. The most violent opponents of the court during the late reign, Abingdon, Weymouth, Dartmouth, Musgrave, Grenville, Harcourt, Gower, and Howe, were also chosen Privy Councillors; while, when the list appeared, the great names of Halifax and Somers, with others who were known to be devoted to the cause of the Revolution, were found to be left out. The two Secretaries-of-State were Sir Charles Hedges and the Earl of Nottingham, both Tories, and Nottingham, indeed, was looked upon as a kind of model Tory, in whom the country gentlemen and the country clergymen had the most implicit confidence.

St. John as yet received no offer of employment. As he had been little more than a year in the House of Commons, and was still very young, he could scarcely expect at once to reap the rewards of official life. But he had no reason to be dissatisfied with his position. Few public men in so few months had done so much; few seemed to have a brighter career before them.

It had been provided that the parliament which might be sitting on the death of the king should continue to exist six months after the accession of the next heir to the Crown. But Queen Anne and her advisers thought fit to anticipate the period of

mortality. This parliament was prorogued on the 25th of May, and dissolved on the 2nd of July. Again was St. John chosen member for Wootton Bassett; and during the recess he had a still further mark of the esteem in which he was held by the Tories, who, indeed, at that time regarded him pre-eminently as the rising man. As the Queen went from Windsor to Bath, she stopped at Oxford, and received from the University the most unbounded expressions of devotion and loyalty. The Tories being once more in the ascendant, the Tory dons gladly conferred their academical honours on the Tory chiefs. St. John received the degree of Doctor, with other eminent members of his party, including Mr. Bromley and Sir Simon Harcourt.

The new parliament met for business on the 20th of October.* Harley was, for the third time, chosen Speaker, and the Tories appeared stronger than ever. They were as triumphant as usual in the House of Commons on any disputed election; and in the address in answer to the speech from the throne, with a majority of a hundred they indirectly reflected on the preceding reign by complimenting the Queen as having, through the auspices of her favourite general, "retrieved" the honour of the English arms. But when her Majesty proposed, in a royal message, to reward the general with a dukedom, and a pension of 5,000*l.* a year for life out of the Post Office, the Commons showed themselves far from so eager to prematurely reward Marlborough, as invidiously to asperse the reign and memory of William.

* As a matter of convenience, where it is not otherwise indicated, I generally follow the old style in giving dates, as it was during Bolingbroke's public life the style of England.

But the great struggle of the Tories, with St. John at their head, was, this session, for a measure which, under the title of the Occasional Conformity Bill, was to be reintroduced in many subsequent years, maintaining fierce controversies with the House of Lords, and inflaming the animosities of the High Churchmen against the Dissenters from one end of the kingdom to the other. The Dissenters, by once taking the Sacrament, had been allowed to qualify themselves for temporal offices. But such indulgence was obnoxious to the zealous Tories, and to the party which was now in unquestioned supremacy both in the government and the House of Commons. Shortly after the meeting of parliament, the Bill against Occasional Conformity was brought in. It was powerfully supported in all its stages by St. John, whose bold and dashing oratory was received with enthusiastic cheers by the intolerant High Churchmen. The resistance of the Whigs was in vain. Walpole could only stammer out a few ungraceful sentences in favour of toleration. The Bill, supported by the ministers and the majority of the Commons, was, on the 2nd of December, sent up to the House of Lords. There all the strength of the court was put forth to carry the measure, in which the Queen, whose ruling political principle was a kind of blind and feeble devotion to what she called the Church party, fully concurred. Prince George, though he had taken the Sacrament as Lord High Admiral, and was himself an occasional Conformist, voted for the Bill; and on dividing against the Whig peers said, apologetically, to Lord Wharton, "My heart is vid you." Marlborough and Godolphin, still professed Tories, and sons of the Church, little dreaming how soon they would require other allies, also sup-

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ported the measure. But the majority of the peers were still steady to the principles of the Revolution and of King William. The Bill, much to the indignation of the Tories, was thrown out. At a free conference on the subject between the Lords and the other House, which was held in the Painted Chamber on the 16th of January, 1703, young St. John was one of the managers for the Commons, and, among veteran statesmen and lawyers of great eminence, his abilities made themselves conspicuous.* The Lords, however, being unconvinced by reasoning, however spirited and eloquent in the cause of intolerance, the Bill was lost.

To revenge themselves for this repulse, Mr. St. John, and those who were associated with him in the conference, and who with himself were called the greatest sticklers for the High Church party, not satisfied with putting De Foe into the pillory for a pamphlet against their cause,† hit upon another device. According to the maxims of that age, it was not thought sufficient to drive a statesman from office: his political opponents were not satisfied unless they could punish him as a criminal. Halifax, the great Whig financier, the champion of the monied interest, the founder of the Bank of England, had long been most obnoxious to the Tories. They had voted his impeachment: they had all but declared him guilty of peculation. They now appointed seven commissioners to examine the public accounts for the avowed purpose of finding materials for criminal accusation against Halifax. These commissioners, of whom St.

* Cunningham, book 5, p. 317; Journal of the House of Commons, 16th January, 1703.

† See a small pamphlet, called the Life and History of Henry St. John Viscount Bolingbroke. It was published in 1754; but the author asserts that it was written before the Memoirs, which made their appearance in 1752.

John was one, published a strong Report, called A Narrative in Relation to the Earl of Ranelagh, a veteran official, who had been paymaster of the army in the reign of James II., and had been kept in his office throughout the reign of William. Acting on the Report, to which St. John's name is signed the second of the commissioners, though really there was not much to find fault with in the conduct of the old earl during his long tenure of office, the Commons voted that he had misapplied several sums of public money. But Halifax was the real object of attack. On the eighteenth of January, St. John, in the name of the commissioners, read to the House a general statement of the receipts and expenditure of the revenue from the Michaelmas of 1700 to the year 1702, with observations designed to inflame the majority against their enemy.* Halifax was voted guilty of a breach of trust and of gross mismanagement. An address was presented to the Queen, requesting her to order the Attorney-General to prosecute him for misconduct in office; but the Lords again came to his rescue, and absolved the accused Baron.

This led to the most serious differences between the two Houses. St. John and the Tories affected to resent the conduct of the Lords in respect to one of their own body, as an interference with the financial privileges of the Commons. They moved a strong representation to the Queen. Again they brought forward that subject which had in the last year of the former reign been so fertile in altercations, and continued so during all the reign of Anne, the resumption of King William's grants of land. They introduced a Bill disqualifying placemen from sitting in parliament. In the debate on

* Parl. Hist., vi. 127.

these measures the two young members, Walpole and St. John, came forward in fierce personal antagonism; and though the member for Castle Rising was still rude and unpolished in his address, he, somehow or other, to St. John's surprise and disdain, appeared to be acquiring the ear of the House, and was loudly applauded by the Whigs. The Lords still more enraged the factious majority in the other House by throwing out the Disqualification Bill. Between the two branches of the Legislature the animosity had at length risen to such a height, that every friend of the constitution became alarmed. The Queen at length, on the 27th of February, put an end to the disputes by putting an end to the session.

Parliament met again on the 9th November. The Occasional Conformity Bill was again brought in, and powerfully supported in all its stages by St. John. It was again carried triumphantly through the House of Commons; but the Whig Lords, with Bishop Burnet and Lord Halifax at their head, were still resolute in upholding the principles of toleration and of their party. The Bill was again lost in the Upper House.

St. John was a principal actor in other business, which still more set the Commons at variance with the Lords. This was called the Scottish Plot, which originated in the unsettled and alarming state of Scotland; Jacobites and Cameronians uniting together through national prejudices to bring about a counter-revolution in the Northern kingdom. The Lords, anxious for the Revolution, chose to examine the accused persons themselves; but the Tory minority, some of whom were influenced by the Jacobite inclinations, and others by violent hostility to the majority of Whig peers, fiercely resented this exercise of authority. Mr. St. John

was one of the members appointed to search the Lords' Journals on the subject. On the 20th of December he read the results of the investigation to the House, and laid the Paper on the table. Strong resolutions were passed against the Lords, and a committee, whose leading member was St. John, was appointed to draw up an address to her Majesty in accordance with the declarations of the Commons. He read the Report on the 23rd; it was laid upon the table, and agreed to by the House.* But the Lords passed counter-resolutions, and voted a counter address declaratory of their right to examine persons and order them into custody; and they affirmed, not without much reason, that the address of the Commons was unparliamentary. The paper war between the two estates was vigorously waged. But whoever reads attentively the documents which emanated from the Lords on the question in dispute, will be struck by the immense superiority in strength of argument, moderation of tone, and knowledge of the constitution, over those which came from the angry Commons. And no wonder. The papers in which the peers asserted their privileges were drawn up by Somers: and though Mr. St. John could give something of vivacity and fluency of style to the compositions of the Commons, it was not on questions of this kind that himself and all his friends united could fairly be considered a match for the great constitutional lawyer and statesman. The addresses of the Lords were published, and produced a great effect on the public mind, while the papers of the Commons were read with indifference.†

Another constitutional question of great import-

* Parl. Hist., vi. 179.

† See Burnet's Memoirs of his Own Times, v. 116.

ance was immediately afterwards agitated between the two Houses. In the contention, too, St. John took a leading part on the side of the majority of the Commons: though, unfortunately, as in the case of the Kentish petition, it was also the side which the highest authorities have pronounced to be totally wrong. This dispute, known in our constitutional history as the case of Ashby and White, gave rise to long debates, and has been widely celebrated. The manner in which disputed elections were determined had become the scandal of the legislature. Even the returning officers, influenced by the prevailing spirit, began to show a similar indifference to law and justice, and sought to prevent electors who were obnoxious to their party from recording their votes. Ashby, an elector of Aylesbury, sued the returning officer for this conduct; but three of the judges, in opposition to Holt, the great oracle of the Revolution, decided that a right of action did not lie. A writ of error was brought into the House of Lords, and the judgment was reversed. The majority of the Commons were thrown into a fever of indignation. It was assumed, as an axiom of the constitution, by St. John and his friends, that, because the Commons were the judges of all disputed returns, they also had alone the right to determine who could or could not vote at elections. According to the spirit in which these electioneering disputes were then decided, this doctrine, strictly carried out, really put the right to vote of every elector in the kingdom at the will of the prevailing majority, whose avowed principle it was in such matters to give no quarter to their political adversaries. Had the elector then no protection in the exercise of his privileges? Holt declared that the right of voting at

elections was original, according as it was held from a freehold or burgage tenure in a county, or from charter or prescription in a borough: and that this right might be duly taken cognizance of by courts of law.

So thought the Lords: but in opposition to the majority of the Commons. The first reported speech of St. John was made on the 26th of January, 1704, on the resolution that according to the known law and usage of parliament, neither the qualification of any elector, nor the right of any person elected, is cognizable or determinable elsewhere than before the Commons of England in parliament assembled. He spoke in reply to the Whig Marquis of Hartington, who argued that, if such a maxim had formerly been allowed, it would not have been necessary to take away charters, or have anything to do with *quo warrantos*. Could not the Court by its efficient influence have filled the House with what members it pleased? and could they not have declared themselves duly elected? St. John thought differently. He declared that he would be as tender as any man alive of the liberties of the people; and that he voted for the resolution because he considered it the greatest security for their liberties. "I cannot think," said he, "that the liberties of the people are safer in any hands than our own, or that the influence of the crown will be stronger here than in the courts below."*

In the same debate Walpole spoke with more effect than he had ever previously done against the doctrine enunciated by St. John, and in defence of the legal rights of the electors. But the resistance of the

* Parl. Hist., vi. 301.

Whigs was in vain, and the two Houses of Parliament were more than ever brought into unseemly collision. The Commons had their resolutions placarded on the gate at Westminster; the Lords sent theirs to all the sheriffs of the kingdom, to be made known to the electors whose rights they asserted. The people took the side of the peers, and the representatives of the people found their actions disavowed by their constituents.* Their rage was increased. On the 3rd of April the queen, regretting that her advice for moderation and union had not been taken, was obliged precipitately to prorogue the parliament. But a great change, in which the political fortunes of St. John were deeply interested, had just been decided upon by the all-powerful Marlborough, and the pliant treasurer, Godolphin.

* See the Legion's Humble Address to the Lords.

CHAPTER IV.

1704—1708.

THE SECRETARY-AT-WAR.

While the party battles were being fought with so much acrimony in parliament, Marlborough was achieving triumph after triumph on the Continent. But the war had never been embraced with enthusiasm by the Tories. The Grand Alliance had been framed by William; the victories of Marlborough had given it stability; but the war was essentially a Whig war. As the struggle proceeded, the great general found himself more enthusiastically supported by his political enemies than by many of the Tory leaders and their followers, with whom he had long been closely connected. Every day Godolphin, and those of his colleagues who were devoted to Marlborough and his policy, found themselves drawing closer to the Whigs, and separating from the more decided Tories. The last time the Occasional Conformity Bill had been brought in, though it was still ostensibly supported by Godolphin and Marlborough, they saw it introduced with regret, and rejoiced at its defeat. The more they needed the Whigs, the more they were compelled to adopt Whig principles.

The Earl of Rochester had in disgust, some time before, resigned the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland; but just as the session ended in the April of 1704, the opportunity presented itself for far more important alterations in the Godolphin ministry.

The Earl of Nottingham had long been considered the most honest politician among the Tories. He was a man of principle, conscientiously a Tory without being a Jacobite. Many of his contemporaries laughed at scruples which at least expressed Nottingham's conviction. He wore a rusty brown coat with small sleeves and long pockets; he was tall and gaunt, without grace or proportions; and his swarthy face always looked so serious, even to sadness, that he was nicknamed Dismal. In gravity and deportment he had the appearance of a solemn, but somewhat ungainly Spanish nobleman, and was afterwards, in the History of John Bull, called Don Diego.*

As Godolphin and Marlborough gradually approached to an alliance with the Whigs, the Earl of Nottingham, whom they had appointed Secretary-of-State at the Queen's accession, grew extremely discontented. At length, under the instigation of his Tory friends, he went to her Majesty to endeavour to persuade her to dismiss the Dukes of Devonshire and Somerset from her councils, as a proof that the supremacy of the Tories had been re-established in the cabinet. But the Queen's powerful advisers had exactly opposite intentions, and Nottingham's importunities were unavailing. The Earl then placed his seals of office in his sovereign's hands. Anne advised him to reconsider his determination. But he found that, so far

* See Swift's Journal to Stella, Dec. 5, 1711, and *passim*; Post Boy, Dec. 6, 1711; The History of John Bull, chaps. xiii. and xiv.

from his remonstrances producing the effect he had intended, that the Tory Earl of Jersey, the Lord Chamberlain, and the Tory, Sir Edward Seymour, Comptroller of the Household, had both been called upon to resign their staves of office. Nottingham relinquished the seals, which were subsequently given, on the 20th of April, to Harley, and his friend St. John was made Secretary-at-War. He, indeed, united two appointments in his person. It was officially announced that Mr. St. John had become Secretary-at-War and of the Marines.*

The appointment of Harley as Secretary of State was sufficient evidence of his skill, if not in statesmanship, at least in state-craft. Always voting with the Tories, he had still retained so much of his former political associations as to be on good terms with the Dissenters, and not to have become positively obnoxious to the Whigs; and though neither Marlborough nor Godolphin regarded him with any especial favour, his nomination to office was considered a proof of their tact and moderation. St. John had however gone all length with the Tories; and had already incurred the hatred of the Whigs. How was it then that in this season of compromise he was made Secretary at War? Did he owe the appointment to Harley's determination not to accept office without his friend? Or was it owing independently of Harley to the abilities which St. John had displayed in the House of Commons? Or did he owe his elevation to the personal friendship and favour of Marlborough alone?

It is certain that between St. John and Harley, from the first, there had been an intimate political alliance.

* See Memoirs of Bolingbroke, 1752, p. 102.

No stronger testimony can be given to the closeness of the union of statesmen than the fact of their entering office together and retiring together; of being joined in the same friendships, and of incurring the same hatreds. All this can be said with truth of the connection between those two statesmen who were, unknown to their colleagues, aspiring so high. Neither did Bolingbroke, though ready enough to disavow his obligations to his former friend, ever deny that Harley did assist him to climb to power. But then it must be also admitted, that in seeking to promote St. John, Harley was doing what he thought best for his own interests; and that the position which the younger statesman had already acquired in the House of Commons fully justified his promotion.

Yet after all there can be little doubt that it was mainly to Marlborough St. John owed his appointment as Secretary-at-War. Those who are acquainted with the intimate personal relations which existed in a time of war between the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of that department, and who know how great was the influence of the Duke in the Godolphin administration, cannot fail to be convinced, that no person who was at all objectionable to Marlborough, and indeed no person whom he did not in an especial degree favour, would be chosen to fulfil the duties of that particular post. It was an office of the highest responsibility. On the efficiency with which the business was performed depended in no small degree the success of a campaign. The Secretary-at-War had to be in constant correspondence with the general abroad, and was his official organ of communication on military details with her Majesty, with whom it was necessary for this

purpose to have very frequent interviews. He had at that time even more delicate duties to discharge. He had to conciliate and manage Marlborough's haughty and flighty duchess, who domineered over the ministers and interfered in all the details of the administration.* St. John was represented at the time of his appointment as a particular favourite of Marlborough. This general impression was doubtless correct. Nor did he ever deny that such was the fact. On the contrary, in all his published writings after his fall from power, Bolingbroke expressed himself in regard to Marlborough with a tenderness and delicacy which showed a consciousness of the deepest obligation; and I shall presently show, that, while he was even Secretary-at-War, he expressed himself in the most explicit manner as bound to the great general by every honourable tie. He was looked upon as a creature of the Duke; and a creature of the Duke, he for a time appears to have considered himself. Marlborough, on the other hand, was ready to answer for St. John's fidelity to his employers in the manner of a patron who was conscious that his influence had obtained the young man his first appointment to office. "I am glad," the duke wrote to Godolphin "that you are well pleased with Mr. St. John's diligence, and I am very confident he will never deceive you." †

There has also been preserved a letter of Marlborough to St. John from Maestricht at this period. It is an answer to the notification that the new Secretary-at-War had entered upon the duties of his office, and, as the beginning of their official correspondence, may here deserve quotation:

* See Coxe's Walpole, i. 23, edit. 1798, and the Walpole Correspondence.

† Letter to Godolphin, July 13, 1704.

"To Mr. St. John.

"Maestricht, May 11, 1704.

"Sir,

"I have received the favour of your letter, and by the last post had one from Mr. Blathwayt, by which I find you were entered upon the execution of your office, so that I may hope to hear frequently from you.

"We have been very much disappointed by the retardment of the last convoy, for, besides recruits, it was to have brought over several necessaries for the troops, who have been obliged to march without them, and it will be a difficult matter now for anything to join us. On Wednesday next they pass the Meuse at Ruremond, on their march to the Moselle, and I may venture to tell you (though I would not have it public as yet), I design to march a great deal higher into Germany.

"I came hither yesterday, in the afternoon, and shall stay four or five days more with the army, and then join our troops in the country of Juliers; but, wherever I am, you may be assured I shall be always ready to give you fresh assurances of my being,

"With great truth and sincerity,

"Sir,

"Your most faithful humble servant,

"M."

The intention which Marlborough in this letter avows of marching "a great deal higher into Germany," he soon carried into effect. The consequence was the battle of Blenheim, fought in Bavaria on the 13th of August, which raised the general's glory to the highest point, and set all England wild with joy and pride. Englishmen had good reason for rejoicing and

thanksgiving. It would be a poor philosophy which would ignore the fact, that, after a period of apparent degeneracy, this great victory, in rivalling in modern times the glories of Cressy and Agincourt, stimulated the patriotic spirit of the people, and in stimulating their patriotic spirit added both politically and commercially to the power of the nation. Even the trade of England, with all due deference to the utilitarian theories of political economists, never would, in the early portion of the last century, have begun to put forth such gigantic shoots, had it not been for the victories of Marlborough. It was the good fortune of St. John to have just been appointed to office before this great continental battle was won; and the triumphs of the general appeared to be shared by the Secretary at War.

When the queen opened parliament on the 29th of October, she might well indeed express her joy and the joy of her subjects at the great and remarkable success with which Providence had blessed her arms during the summer. But the Tories were by no means so enthusiastic. They felt that the ministry and the general were no longer their own. After his first campaign they had not been satisfied without declaring that Marlborough had retrieved the honour of the English arms, in order to cast a slur upon King William and the Whigs; but now they grudged to the hero of Blenheim, since he was becoming connected with the Whigs, acknowledgments which they had previously lavished upon him when he was regarded as the patron of the high church party; and in the address in answer to the royal speech they coupled congratulations on his great achievements with similar expressions of approbation to Admiral Sir George

Rooke for a drawn battle with the French in the Mediterranean.*

Very different, however, was the feeling of St. John. He wrote, himself, a most enthusiastic letter of congratulation to the victorious general, from his country seat of Bucklersbury. John Phillips, whom he kept supplied with tobacco and wine, thus concluded his Blenheim, which was intended to be a Tory rival to Addison's Whig poem on the same glorious subject :—

> "Thus from the noisy crowd exempt, with ease
> And plenty blest, amid the mazy groves,
> Sweet solitude! where warbling birds provoke
> The silent muse, delicious rural seat
> Of St. John, English Memmius, I presumed
> To sing Britannic trophies, inexpert
> Of war, with mean attempt; while he, intent
> (So Anna's will ordains) to expedite
> His military charge, no leisure finds
> To string his charming shell. But when returned,
> Consummate Peace shall rear her cheerful head,
> Then shall his Churchill, in sublimer muse,
> For ever triumph; latest times shall learn
> From such a chief to fight, and bard to sing."

The verses are not striking, but they recall pleasant thoughts to the mind. We see St. John's pleasant country-house at Bucklersbury, with the rich foliage of the trees becoming darker as autumn approached, his horses standing idle in the stables, and his dogs vainly listening for their master's approach, while the Secretary-at-War was bending over his official desk in smoky London, vainly longing for a holiday. Phillips, however, was a worse prophet than poet. The writings which St. John afterwards as Secretary at War patronised about Marlborough were in a very different style from these verses. Already the party

* See the Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough, p. 146. Parl. Hist., vi. 357.

† See John Phillips' Blenheim, &c.

spirit was at work which was to pluck the feather from the soaring eagle's wing.

Notwithstanding her Majesty's earnest exhortations to union, the prejudices of the Tories were found to be still as strong as ever. Again they introduced the Bill against occasional conformity; and they prepared to take the most unconstitutional means to force it through the House of Lords by tacking it to the Land-Tax Bill. This disgraceful expedient was proposed by Bromley at the second reading of the Bill on the 28th of November; the motion occasioned a long debate; but it was defeated by a majority of 117. The discussion caused great excitement. A list of those who voted for and against the tack was circulated throughout the country; and, as if to show that office was already producing its usual sedative effects, among those who voted against the proposal was found the new Secretary at War, Mr. Henry St. John.*

Shortly afterwards the Bill settling the manor of Woodstock on the Duke of Marlborough was brought in. But St. John was not, as he has been represented, the author of the measure, nor was he the principal instrument in passing it through the House of Commons. It was introduced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to whose department indeed it belonged. But it does not appear to have provoked much opposition, or required St. John's ready and graceful eloquence to be called forth in its support.†

From this time his history for a period merges into the general history of the Godolphin administration, and his political life loses something of its individual character. He was unquestionably able, active, and industrious, showing himself on every occasion ready

* Parl. Hist., vi. 366. † Ibid., p. 375.

to put himself forward, and render efficient service to his colleagues.* Office was to him a school of discipline and a school of improvement; to master thoroughly the intricacies of finance and military details relating to his department required application; and St. John came forth from his secretaryship a thorough man of business.

But in becoming a man of business he did not cease to be a man of pleasure. His time was spent alternately at the Secretary's desk and at the supper-table, among those who were then called the bottle men, gentlemen who did not consider they had been fairly dealt with unless they had been allowed their four bottles at a sitting. St. John was one of these bottle men; and even in office, just as much as when he was a mere rake about town, was notorious for the quantity of wine he could drink without becoming intoxicated. Claret he could swallow in any quantities; but his favourite beverage was champagne, which he not unfrequently spent the whole night in drinking. Then he was also just as much a rake as when he wrote verses to the orange-girl in the Court of Requests; and his licentious gallantries were just as indiscriminate. All was fish that came into his net: a frail beauty of fashion, a servant-maid, a common woman of the town. Office was no restraint on these scandalous irregularities, which were the talk and jest of the political world. St. John was, however, though an eminent politician, still a very young man; and even grave and pious persons might not unreasonably hope that as he grew older ambition itself might subdue those more glaring and vulgar vices which

* Burnet speaks of him as active in the service of the administration: see also Bolingbroke's Memoirs, 1754.

sought their gratification in the tavern and in the stews.

He could not be insensible to the fact that the field of ambition was day by day widening gloriously before him, and that there was within the reach of an English statesman nothing to which he might not reasonably aspire.

The session ended like so many former sessions. Her Majesty's gracious advice to the two estates was disregarded, and the Lords and Commons were just as much at variance as ever. The case of the Aylesbury men was more or less before Parliament nearly all the time the Houses were sitting. On both sides there were more resolutions, more committees of privilege, more addresses to the Crown, and more conferences. St. John did not take so prominent a part in this controversy as he had done in the previous year; but the result was exactly the same. The majority in the House of Commons boldly requested her Majesty to interfere with the regular course of law by refusing to grant writs of error. Another representation was drawn up by Somers and his friends in the House of Lords, still more admirable, as a constitutional document, than that which had emanated from the same source the year before; and the Commons, as was generally acknowledged, were again signally defeated in the encounter of precedent with precedent, and argument with argument.* The violence of their representatives disgusted the people more than ever. Happily the people at length were about to have the remedy in their own power, as the time was at hand when, according to the provisions of the Triennial Bill, the existence of the Parliament must expire. It was prorogued on

* This remarkable document will be found in the Parl. Hist., vi. 420.

the 14th of March, 1705, and dissolved on the 5th of April.

The elections for the new Parliament, the second of Queen Anne, were contested with the cry that the Church was in danger. Supported by the clergy, the Jacobites, and even the Roman Catholics, the Tories exerted themselves most strenuously; and the court, doubtful which side would prevail, remained apparently neutral between the contending factions. Nevertheless, it soon became clear that the position of parties was altered; and that the Whigs had such a majority as they had not possessed for many years. Encouraged by the result, Godolphin and Marlborough showed still more decidedly their preference by the dismissal of Sir Nathan Wright, an old Tory lawyer and high Churchman, who had for some years with manifest incapacity held the Great Seal, and the appointment in his place of William Cowper, the pride and ornament of the Whigs, and their most accomplished orator in the House of Commons.*

St. John perhaps scarcely approved of this change in the relations of parties. But he still sat for Wootton Bassett, and during the year seemed fully satisfied with his office, and anxious to conciliate the great chiefs of the Godolphin administration. He omitted no opportunity of showing his devotion to Marlborough. The campaign was not so successful as some sanguine persons had anticipated. A battle of Blenheim could not be won every year: but people, encouraged by success, expected nothing but victories and triumphs on the grandest scale. Marlborough's operations on the Moselle and Saur were frustrated by the characteristic dilatoriness of his German allies. He was obliged to

* See the Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough, p. 159.

fall back on the Maese; and afterwards, through the conduct of the Dutch, could, during the summer, do little more than raise the siege of Liege, in the most masterly manner pass the French lines, and advance victoriously to Tirlemont.

The Secretary at War dutifully sympathized with the annoyances of the great commander. St. John, above all things, was anxious that no temporary miscarriages should precipitate an unsatisfactory peace, which he thought would be ruin to England. Writing to Marlborough this August, St. John observed:—

"It was very melancholy to find the malice of Schlangenberg, the fears of Dopf, and the ignorance of the deputies, to mention no more, prevail so to disappoint your Grace, to their prejudice as well as ours. We hope the Dutch have agreed to what your Grace desires of them, without which the war becomes a jest to our enemies, and can end in nothing but an ill peace, which is certain to ruin us."*

Marlborough was equally friendly. St. John had been down to Woodstock, and informed his Grace how matters were going on there. The general answers from the camp at Tirlemont in the middle of September:—

"Sir,

"I am now only to thank you for the favour of your letter of the 28th of last month, this quarter at present being in so perfect a calm that it affords not the least matter for your information. I am obliged to you for what you intimate to me from Woodstock, and should be glad of a more particular account of that affair, if it be not disposed of before I get to England, where

* St. John to Marlborough, August 28, 1705.

I had never more reason to wish myself than now. I shall flatter myself with the hopes that the conduct of our friends will prevent the ill impression our disappointments here might give at home, and that the public service will be carried on without obstacle: this is, I am sure, the only means of repairing what is past, and am therefore confident of your hearty concurrence in it.

"I am, truly, Sir,

"Yours, &c.,

"M."*

This letter was written in anticipation of the meeting of the new parliament. His Grace was naturally anxious to know whether harmony would be restored between the two branches of the legislature, and whether the Government could count on a decided majority, in order that he might be vigorously supported in carrying on the war.

On the 25th of October, when the new parliament met for business, there was a greater attendance of members in the House of Commons than had ever before been known. The Tories, conscious that they had lost strength in the late elections, came up to a man from the country to support their party in the great contest for the Speakership. Walpole, who, notwithstanding all obstacles, was gradually becoming recognized as the Whig leader in the House of Commons, himself seconded the nomination of John Smith, a sound Whig and plain man of business; St. John's old ally, William Bromley, member for the University of Oxford, was put up by the Tories. On the division, the Tories were defeated by a majority of forty-five,

* Marlborough to St. John, Sept. 14, 1705.

in a House where four hundred and fifty-three members voted. The ascendancy of the Whigs, emulously supporting the Godolphin administration, was established.

As the session began so it continued and ended, to the great delight of all patriots and friends of the Protestant succession. An insidious motion of the Tories for bringing over the Princess Sophia, in order to put their opponents on bad terms with the Queen, was defeated. In both Houses resolutions were passed, and addresses framed, declaring that the Church was in no danger. The bills of supply for proceeding steadily with the war were enthusiastically voted; and St. John, as the organ of the Government in conducting the military estimates through the House of Commons, showed a clearness of head for mastering and explaining details which excited the admiration of all men. The noble design of the union between England and Scotland, which had been recommended in the last speech of William to his parliament, and which had, to frustrate the Scottish plots of France and the Pretender, been taken up by the ministry, was vigorously pressed forward; and when the parliament was prorogued on the 19th of March, 1706, it seemed that this blessed and happy project would soon be satisfactorily accomplished. There was joy everywhere that after so many years of faction and animosity the country at last had such a legislature. The city of London took the lead, and it was followed by the nation and our allies throughout Europe, in affirming that this was the best session and the best parliament England had ever seen.*

With brighter auspices at home, the Duke of Marl-

* See Burnet's Memoirs of his Own Times, v. 238.

borough could look more cheerfully at the prospect of the campaign which began in May 1706. Renouncing his intention of going personally to the assistance of Prince Eugene in Italy, he appeared at the head of the allied troops in Flanders. The French were superior in numbers, and, relying on this superiority, came out of their lines, and encamped near Tirlemont. The consequence was the famous battle of Ramillies, in which the duke again displayed all the genius of a consummate commander, and all the bravery of the common soldier. He was thrown from his horse, and in danger of being overpowered. A cannon ball struck off the head of an officer who was assisting him to remount. But still that serene courage never faltered. The French were driven out of the village of Ramillies, at the point of the bayonet, and completely routed; the King of France's own regiment surrendering their colours and laying down their arms.

The soul of the Secretary-at-War was all on fire at the news. He sent immediately his congratulation to the general. Faction was to be put down in England, France was to be put down on the Continent: such was the song of triumph St. John hastend to sing. "This vast addition of renown which," he wrote to Marlborough, "your grace has acquired, and the wonderful preservation of your life, are subjects upon which I can never express a thousandth part of what I feel. France and faction are the only enemies England has to fear, and your grace will conquer both; at least while you beat the French you give a strength to government which the other dares not contend with." *

St. John in this busy season worked zealously in his office. While Marlborough was beating the Elector of

* St. John to Marlborough, May 28, 1706.

Bavaria and the Marquis de Villeroy in Flanders, Prince Eugene was also, during the summer, victorious over the Duke of Orleans in Italy, and in Spain Lord Peterborough and Sir John Leake gallantly relieved Barcelona. With the war raging on all sides, the secretary had enough to do. St. John was equal to his various duties. In July he was busy on the details of an expedition under Lord Rivers; and there is extant, in manuscript, a letter which, as a specimen of the official style of the Secretary-at-War, may deserve quotation.

"Sir, "Whitehall, July 6, 1706.

"My Lord Rivers having settled the list of such officers who, having been taken off from the French pension in Ireland, in order to serve in the present expedition, are incapable or do not wilfully decline going upon service; and the same having been laid before the queen, her Majesty does think fit that they should be restored to their pensions in Ireland, and to that end I transmit the said list to you that you may acquaint his grace the Duke of Ormond with her Majesty's pleasure therein.

"I am, Sir,

"Yr most obedient

"Humble servant,

"H. St. John.*

"*Mr. Southwell.*"

The signature is in St. John's large, bold, and characteristic hand. On the other side of the letter there is a list appended of the officers to be restored, all having unmistakable French names, and some of which have become famous, and others infamous, in French

* Additional MSS., 12,099.

history: "Cabrol, Moncal, Laforteles, Vaury, Labeisade, Vigneul, Bordaneive, Garrison, Girard, Bignoux, Labaume, Laval, Coulon, Duhomet, Lamote Cercler, Bonabel, Dagos, Lafitte."

But while the Secretary at War was busy at his desk, while victory seemed everywhere to attend the allies, while England and Scotland were being happily united into one kingdom, while the court, parliament, and the people appeared on the best of terms, and everything was so prosperous both at home and abroad, the seeds of other discords, misfortunes and hatreds, were gradually being sown. It is not easy to fix the exact time of this germination; but the crop rapidly sprung up, and the harvest bade fair to be abundant.

The Whigs were wild with joy. Every success of the general abroad they felt a triumph for themselves at home. The war was their war; the policy was their policy; they felt that the spirit of King William still gave life to the grand alliance. They became more and more impatient of the presence of any of their political opponents in the ministry, and supported by the Duchess of Marlborough insisted on their right to exclusive administration. Their pertinacity was increased by a suspicion that some sinister influence was at work; and that while their power seemed outwardly so strongly established in the government and parliament, they were being secretly undermined at court.

They had very good reason indeed for this suspicion, which soon became a certainty. The biographer of St. John may be excused from entering into a full detail of the intrigues of which Harley was then the mover, and Abigail Hill, whom he made Mrs. Masham, the instrument; and of the influence which was thus set to work to counteract all the politic schemes of

Godolphin, and all the victories of Marlborough. But with respect to this Mrs. Masham, flattery itself cannot produce a portrait that is even tolerable, much less favourable. This demure Abigail, coming stealthily out of the queen's closet, with her red nose and downcast eyes,* and cautiously supplanting her relative and patroness, who, whatever may have been her conduct to others, had acted most generously and kindly to her, is about the poorest and most contemptible character that was ever made the heroine of a great party, to confound all the calculations of great warriors and astute statesmen. The most convincing proof of the necessity of a constitutional government, acting through a strictly responsible ministry to a parliament whose representatives in the House of Commons should be strictly responsible to the intelligent and educated portion of the people, is to point to this Mrs. Masham, whispering in the ear of the dull, portly, passive Queen the suggestions of Harley, who is waiting for his confederate on the backstairs.

Some persons, whilst admitting that Harley's conduct was inexcusable, have doubted whether St. John had anything to do with the miserable intrigue from which he afterwards so greatly profited. That he had nothing to do with it at the beginning, may easily be believed; but that he was soon acquainted with Harley's proceedings, fully approved of them, and was anxious to co-operate in them, cannot admit of a reasonable doubt. Indeed it appears, from a letter to Marlborough, that so early as the October of this year, 1706, Godolphin and the Duchess had already begun to suspect St. John as well as his friend and colleague, Harley.†

* Swift's Journal to Stella.

† Godolphin to Marlborough, Oct. 18, 1706.

St. John, however, still professed himself under the deepest obligations to Marlborough. Nor is there much reason to suspect his sincerity: perhaps he hoped the duke would not entirely give up the Tories, and allow their leaders who were yet in office to be all driven out. With her own hand, the duchess afterwards wrote on a letter of St. John, that the Duke of Marlborough had never acted so kindly to any one as to him; and that Godolphin said in his presence, he never reproached himself so much with anything while he was in office under Queen Anne, as in granting unreasonable sums of money to St. John, at the request of Marlborough. The insinuation was, that the Secretary-at-War, notwithstanding his private fortune and his official income, was always needy, and was always soliciting the Treasury for money, which he obtained through Marlborough's recommendation.*

It is certain that language could not contain stronger terms of gratitude than those with which St. John expressed his obligations to Marlborough. One of these may be quoted, in order to set the question, as to whether he did or did not owe anything to the duke, at rest for ever. "There are some restless spirits who," wrote the Secretary-at-War, to Marlborough on the Continent, "are foolishly imagined to be the heads of a party, who make much noise and have no real strength, that expect the queen, crowned with success abroad, and governing without blemish at home, should court them at the expense of her own authority, and support her administration by the same shifts that a vile and profligate one can only be kept with. We have had some instances of late how they would use their power; and your grace cannot but know that in

* Private Correspondence of the Duchess of Marlborough, ii. 292.

the distribution of employment, they have insisted on the scum of their own party. I am too well acquainted with your grace's goodness to suspect you will not pardon me saying so much, since I have no interest in view but the queen's service, and *my gratitude and duty to you who have tied me*, to be for ever,

"My Lord,

"Your grace's most devoted,

"Faithful, humble friend,

"H. St. John."*

The tenor of this letter is not to be mistaken. The general impression then of St. John's contemporaries was correct. To Marlborough the Secretary-at-War principally owed his early eminence in the state; and the newspapers, pamphleteers and Jacobite correspondents, were right when they spoke of St. John as the duke's favourite.†

It would be wrong, however, to suppose that when he penned this letter, the Secretary-at-War was already contemplating to repay the duke's kindness by perfidy. Harley, it is true, was writing fawning letters to Marlborough, while he was deeply engaged in an intrigue to undermine the general's influence in the closet; but St. John, and even perhaps Harley himself, had yet reason to hope that the duke would not abandon himself fully to a close alliance with the Whigs.

The political situation as the autumn of 1706 drew to a close, may be very briefly defined. Doubting the fidelity both of Godolphin and Marlborough, the Whigs were bent on carrying their point in having the restless and vehement Earl of Sunderland Secretary of

* St. John to Marlborough, Nov. $\frac{12}{23}$, 1706.

† See Anecdotes and Letters in the Stuart Papers, particularly Macpherson, ii. 532.

State, in the place of the Tory, Sir Charles Hedges. The Duchess of Marlborough, both for family and political reasons, earnestly co-operated with them in order to attain this object. The Earl of Sunderland was her son-in-law; she felt that her influence over the queen was gradually declining; Mrs. Morley and Mrs. Freeman now saw each other but seldom; Mrs. Freeman kept haughtily away, and her letters to her royal mistress were full of reproaches. With temper and management, she might yet have preserved, at least in appearance, and for all worldly objects, much of her ascendancy over Anne's feeble mind. But the duchess would be Mrs. Freeman still; and the freedom of her epistolary style was anything but agreeable. The more she found that she could not at once prevail to have Sunderland appointed to the secretaryship, the more her haughtiness and impetuosity increased. Godolphin and Marlborough would gladly have temporised. They did not love Sunderland; they did not love the Whigs; but Sunderland and the duchess would hear of no delay, and the Whigs, unaware of the difficulties which Godolphin and Marlborough had to contend against at court, insisted on the appointment as a pledge of their sincerity. The struggle was long. The backstair interviews were frequent; the royal puppet moved as Harley, through the hands of Mrs. Masham, pulled the strings; the duchess stormed and threatened; Godolphin sent off letter after letter full of fears and forebodings to Marlborough. The Lord Treasurer still alludes to Harley and St. John, especially, as the duke's particular friends, though he shows himself fully sensible of their intrigues with the Tory members.

"Lady Marlborough," wrote Godolphin, "told me this morning, and promised to write to you, that Mr.

Harley, Mr. St. John, and one or two more of your particular friends, were underhand endeavouring to bring all the difficulties they could think of upon the public business in the next session, and spoke of it to me, as taking it for granted it was what I could not have heard of before. . . . . I have had a long letter this very day, full of professions of being guided in these measures as in all others, by you and me: but at the same time I doubt so much smoke could not come without some fire." * Marlborough, in reply, showed how much he considered St. John really to be acting under the instructions of his friend Harley. "By gaining Harley," said the duke, "you will govern the others without taking any pains with them."

But Harley was not so easily to be gained. Neither the duke nor Godolphin were yet aware of all the danger with which they were both threatened. From the time that Harley had entered office as Secretary of State, he had professed to act as Godolphin's humble servant; he had scarcely pretended to have a will of his own: even up to the time his letters were full of professions of devotion and gratitude, perhaps all the more deceptive, because they were very solemn, sometimes confused, and frequently couched in scriptural phraseology. But now confident of the influence he had established over the royal mind, through Mrs. Masham, he gradually began to stand on a separate and independent interest. He became scrupulous; he raised objections. Sensible, perhaps, that if one Tory Secretary of State were dismissed, he, whom the Whigs at last regarded as their enemy, would soon follow the other out of office, he spared no pains to inculcate on the Queen's

* Godolphin to Marlborough, Oct. $\frac{16}{26}$, 1706.

mind all the prejudices against dictators and dictatorships and jealousies of any interference with the royal authority, which her Majesty, after they had been suggested to her, was not slow to entertain.

The contest was prolonged until Marlborough, in November, arrived in England from the wars. His influence, however, prevailed. In December, the Whigs accomplished their party object, and Sunderland received the seals as Secretary of State. Other promotions followed. Though Harley succeeded in making his friend, Sir Simon Harcourt, Attorney-General, it was clear that the Whigs were now steadily advancing to supremacy in the government. The breach between the two sections of the ministry became wider than ever; and Harley and St. John were evidently preparing for the worst.

To all outward appearances nothing could seem more prosperous than the nation at the beginning of the year 1707. The English arms were triumphant on the Continent. Great victories, such as the imagination could hardly have dared to picture, had been won by the English general. He was everywhere followed by the applause and admiration of his countrymen. The standards taken from our enemies were conveyed in triumph from Westminster Hall to St. Paul's. There were illuminations; there were thanksgivings. Addresses from both Houses of Parliament testified to the national obligations. More honours, more emoluments, were showered upon the illustrious soldier's head; and it was expressly provided that the dukedom of Marlborough, the manor of Woodstock, and the house of Blenheim, should go down to posterity together. But as Marlborough himself already felt some symptoms of

premature old age, as his hair was becoming grey, and his memory failing,* so was his power, and the power of the Godolphin administration, being secretly undermined: intrigue was at work in the closet, faction in the senate, and the materials were being prepared for setting all England in a flame.

In the parliament during this session everything seemed quiet. The work of the union was at last accomplished. Whatever may have been their secret discontents, and whatever may have been their covert machinations, Harley and St. John co-operated zealously with their colleagues in carrying the business through the legislature; and the bill of ratification, which was so artfully framed as to prevent its opponents from debating it clause by clause, was drawn up by their friend and political ally, the new Attorney-General, Sir Simon Harcourt. On the 6th of March the queen gave her assent to this great measure; and it was to take effect on the first of the following May. Unfortunately, before that day arrived Harley introduced into a bill, intended to provide against the evasion of the import duties in Scotland, a clause which the Whig peers and the Scots regarded as a breach of the Union before it had been actually consummated. The two Houses were again on the point of collision. But the dexterous intriguer still persevered with his resolution; and showed, perhaps a little imprudently, his influence over the queen. Her

* In the correspondence between Marlborough and his duchess during this autumn, there is the following significant passage:—"If it were not for my duty to the Queen and friendship to the Lord Treasurer, I should beg that somebody else might execute my office; not that I take anything ill, but that the weight is too great for me, and I find a decay in my memory. Whatever may be told you of my looks, the greatest part of my hair is grey; but I think I am not quite so lean as I was."

Majesty, to the surprise of all London, adjourned the parliament for a few days; but when the two Houses again met, the Commons again sent up to the Lords the same bill, and the harmony of months was in danger of being completely destroyed. The dispute was, however, terminated by the close of the session.*

Before this difference arose Marlborough had again returned to the Continent to open the campaign of the year. Letter after letter followed him from the ministers with their different accounts of the dissension. St. John did not venture openly to defend his friend; but he gave a narrative of the facts strongly in Harley's favour. Godolphin showed some reserve, imputing the dispute only to private animosities. But the fierce and acrimonious Sunderland, burning with party zeal, stated the full truth, and, while inveighing most bitterly against Harley, whom the Whigs called the Trickster, really showed a sagacious sense of that to which the eyes of his colleagues were not yet fully opened. "I believe," Sunderland wrote to Marlborough, "you will be surprised at this short prorogation. It is entirely occasioned by him who is the author of all the tricks played here. . . . . I wish those for whom he had acted were ever incapable of thinking him in the wrong, for I fear it may be some time or other too late."†

There was another question on which Harley ventured to show a decided disagreement with his colleagues, and on which St. John must be supposed to have taken his friend's side. The parliament was to be revived by proclamation; and, without any general dissolution, the next session was to be called

* Parl. Hist., vi. 579–81.

† Sunderland to Marlborough, June 1707.

the first of the first parliament of Great Britain. Harley, whose mental vision was none of the clearest, and who was, in many respects, a thorough formalist, did not know what to make of such a method of proceeding. His perplexities were of course increased by his political rivalry and court intrigues; and he doubtless involved the mind of the Queen in the same maze of confusion in which his own was thrown. How, he asked, could an old parliament be a new one? How could the last session of one parliament be called the first session of another? All this, as it has been quaintly and sympathisingly observed, "surpassed Mr. Harley's understanding." * Marlborough was again appealed to, and Marlborough alone had influence enough to overcome the dead-weight of resistance which Harley, who was growing more daily obnoxious to his Whig colleagues, made to the course they proposed to take.

But the more his influence over the Queen became apparent, the more Harley renewed his protestations of devotion to Godolphin and Marlborough. They found that her Majesty had promised vacant bishoprics to High Churchmen and Tories, and that even great resistance was made to their disposal of the Regius Professorship at Oxford. But still Harley fawned, and protested. He wrote to Marlborough in the April of 1707, "Your grace is born to do those great things for your country which no man else ever did or can do; and therefore to your greater share of glory there falls out a greater share of fatigue." † Still later, when his intrigues were notorious, he did not desist from the most solemn professions of gratitude and attachment to Marlborough that any man could possibly

* Memoirs of Bolingbroke, edit. 1752, 105.

† Harley to Marlborough, April $\frac{15}{26}$, 1707.

make to another. Such conduct speaks for itself. If perfidy and falsehood be dishonourable in statesmen, it is impossible to acquit Harley of the most dishonourable breach of faith and the most dishonourable lying.*

Assuredly few men had seen more of treachery and baseness than Marlborough; no man had had a larger experience of the world. He was however for a time fairly deceived by the consummate duplicity of Harley, who, whatever may have been his deficiencies as a statesman, certainly proved himself a thorough proficient in underhand intrigue. He who could beat Marlborough at such a trial of skill must have been no ordinary master of the craft. So, however, it was. Even so late as the summer of 1707, when the letters of Godolphin and the duchess became at last full of their suspicions and fears of the influence at work in the royal closet, Marlborough thought that a few words of strong remonstrance to Harley in her Majesty's presence would be enough to put everything right. He was equally deceived in his estimate of the cunning Abigail, who had, through Harley's manœuvring, been privately married to the page Masham in the presence of the queen. It is strange to find this great statesman and warrior, whose life had been spent in the most corrupt atmosphere of corrupt courts, and whose artful machinations had long been the dread of ministers and sovereigns, so completely deceived by this bedchamber woman. "I should think," he wrote to the duchess in June, "you might speak to her with some caution, which might do good; for she is certainly grateful and will mind what you say." †

* See, in particular, Harley's Letter to Marlborough, of Sept. 16–27, in the Hardwicke State Papers; and Somerville's Queen Anne, p. 268, *note*.

† Marlborough to the Duchess, June 2, 1707.

As the summer of 1707 advanced, the duke at length grew sensible of the danger impending over the Godolphin ministry. But even while he became conscious of Harley's perfidy he still spoke well of St. John, and was ready to intercede with the Lord Treasurer Godolphin to grant St. John more money. Perhaps he thought that, by acting so bountifully to him, the Secretary-at-War was likely to give up his friend Harley, and remain attached to the fortunes of the Godolphin administration. In confirmation of the Duchess's statement about St. John's pecuniary obligations to Marlborough, there is a letter of the duke's from the camp at Meldert, requesting Godolphin, on the 11th of July, to increaset he poundage of the Secretary-at-War, and the expression shows that the request was made by Marlborough not for the first time. "You have so much business," he observed to Godolphin, "that I am afraid you have forgotten to settle with Mr. Bridges the allowance out of the poundage, which I desired for Mr. St. John. I beg the favour of your doing it."

The Secretary-at-War spent an anxious and busy summer; both St. John in his office and Marlborough in the field had enough to do. The campaign was nearly everywhere during this year unsuccessful to England and the allies. The first and greatest misfortune, which to the nation that had been so lately rejoicing at such victories as Blenheim and Ramillies came like a thunder-stroke, was the loss in Spain of the battle of Almanza; the unparalleled successes of the adventurous Peterborough were thrown away by his martinet successor the Earl of Galway, and the cause of the Austrian King Charles, for whom we were nominally fighting, appeared utterly hopeless. Some letters

from the unfortunate general to St. John and his colleagues will be found in the manuscript department of the British Museum; and though to us those long details about horse and foot, and all the necessities of the Spanish army, may have little interest, they show how much application was required to master them in the Secretary-at-War.*

The defeat at Almanza, as well as other calamities, were, in a great measure, attributable to the selfishness and stupidity of the imperial court at Vienna. When Bolingbroke in his later years sought to justify the policy of the peace of Utrecht,† he declaimed with much energy and truth against the ingratitude, blindness, and harshness of the Emperor and his ministers. In all ages Austria has been Austria still. At this time, as in our day, the discontents of the Hungarians, were menacing: but neither knew how to conciliate nor subdue, and acted with wanton tyranny and arrogance. Although England and Holland were fighting to put an Austrian prince on the Spanish throne, the imperial advisers persisted in regarding the war in Spain as a mere diversion, and had all their men in Italy. They capitulated without the knowledge of the allies for the evacuation of the Milanese, and released a great body of veteran troops, that were immediately sent by France to reinforce her army in Spain, and thus outnumbered the allies, and greatly contributed to their defeat. Then, while England and Holland had determined to attack Toulon, Austria resolved to conquer Naples, and again the combined forces were weakened, and the siege of Toulon was raised, not without disgrace.

Marlborough, though he could not be defeated, was

* Egerton MSS., 891. † Letters on History.

equally frustrated in his plans by the Dutch deputies, who, frightened by the battle of Almanza, prevented him from attempting anything of importance. The French, too, led by Vendome, adopted a cautious and dilatory policy, and would not hazard a battle, but retreated from camp to camp until they were within the shelter of their great fortresses, and the campaign came to an end. As if all this were not enough, a few weeks before the session began a great disaster happened at sea. A convoy to Lisbon was defeated and scattered by two French squadrons from Dunkirk and Brest joining unexpectedly together, and attacking the English ships off the Lizard. A loud cry from the commercial world, with the discontents of the Whigs at Anne's evident inclination to the Tories by her appointments to the bishoprics of Exeter and Chester, and the assurances which were now almost openly given by Harley and St. John to the Tory members that the Queen was with them, and that all they had to do was to bide their time, all united to throw gloom and uncertainty over that session of Parliament which met on the 23rd of October, 1707, and which, though the reason could never be made clear to Mr. Harley's understanding, was called the First Session of the First Parliament of Great Britain."*

The Whigs were determined to drive matters to extremity. In the House of Lords there was a committee on the state of the nation; and Prince George as Lord High Admiral, and his board, including Admiral Churchill, the brother of the Duke of Marlborough, were strongly attacked. Strangely enough it must again appear to those who have adopted the Satanic theory about Marlborough to find that he had

* Parl. Hist., vi. 589.

strong family affections, and that, though he disapproved of his brother's conduct, he was observed in the House of Lords to remonstrate warmly with the Earl of Wharton about the manner in which the Admiral had been assailed.*

In both Houses the affairs of Spain were amply discussed; Peterborough, in the Upper House, defending himself, and the Whigs trying to excuse the Earl of Galway; and a memorable resolution was passed just before Christmas declaring that no peace ought to be made while either Spain or the West Indies remained in the power of the House of Bourbon. In the address which was to be sent up to the throne on this subject both Houses concurred; but Bolingbroke was certainly right when he long afterwards affirmed that this was extending the area of the war, instead of showing any desire to bring about a peace, and that a basis was then laid down for hostilities far beyond any that even King William contemplated when he formed the Grand Alliance."†

But to this resolution St. John himself at this time assented. As Secretary-at-War he was still very busy, and the affairs of Spain gave him no little trouble. He was constantly before the House. It was stated that when the battle of Almanza was fought there were only eight thousand British troops under Galway's command. St. John had to produce the muster-rolls; he had to make elaborate calculations; he had to bring forward accounts; and to undergo long and tedious examinations.‡

But his labours as Secretary-at-War were fast drawing to a close. A treasonable correspondence was dis-

* Parl. Hist., vi. 600. † Letters on History.
‡ Parl. Hist., vi. 611.

covered in a packet sent over to Holland, and supposed only to contain authorized letters to the French minister from Marshal Tallard, who had been taken prisoner at the battle of Blenheim. These letters were sent open to Harley's office. A clerk of the name of Gregg took the opportunity, before they were sealed up, of enclosing the copy of an epistle to be written by the Queen to the Emperor with those passages marked which had been drawn up by the Secretary of State, and the additions of the Lord Treasurer. It appeared that other information had been by the same means conveyed to the enemy. An inquiry was set on foot, and the traitor was discovered. He had been introduced into the office by Harley; and the Whigs at once greedily fastened on the discovery to prove that Harley himself was secretly corresponding with France and St. Germains. A committee of lords went to Newgate to examine Gregg; and a long report and address were published. Other men whom Harley had employed as spies between France and England were found to have requited his confidence with equal treachery. It was clearly shown that Harley had acted with the grossest negligence; that the business of his office was transacted at the most unseasonable hours; that documents containing the most important secrets of State were left open for the inspection of the lowest clerks: but still nothing that could directly or indirectly connect him with any secret complicity with the French Government or the Pretender was or could be discovered. His real crime was his intrigue at Court. Marlborough and Godolphin, at last throwing themselves entirely into the hands of the Whigs, insisted on his dismissal. For a time it seemed that he

would prevail; but on the refusal of the Lord Treasurer and the Commander-in-chief to sit with him in council the queen was obliged to yield; and on the 11th of February, 1708, Harley resigned the seals.

St. John had never been a Whig; and the ascendancy of that party in the cabinet was complete. We may not ascribe to him any high notions of political fidelity. He knew himself obnoxious to the Whigs. His name had been coupled with Harley's in those dealings with the Tory members which had given so much annoyance to Godolphin and the Government. When the Queen thought that she might save Harley and sacrifice Godolphin, St. John was even employed by her Majesty to communicate her wishes to the General. It has been said that she wrote a letter, which she permitted the Secretary-at-War to read, before conveying it to the duke, and that she allowed him to state its contents about the town, and especially among the Tories. St. John therefore saw that his own dismissal was virtually involved in the dismissal of Harley; and, indeed, Swift, in afterwards alluding to the circumstance, expressly says that St. John was turned out.* But this does not appear to have been literally the case. He felt that to trust exclusively to the Duke of Marlborough's friendship was to stand upon a very slippery pedestal. He knew that the influence Harley had established over the royal mind would be all the more lasting and secure from this enforced resignation, and that his return to office would, according to all human probability, be merely a question of time. It is evident that he had thoroughly identified himself with Harley's interests, and fully approved of all his

* Journal to Stella, Jan. 13, 1711.

underhand intrigues with his relative, the cunning and demure Abigail Masham, and their royal puppet her gracious Majesty Queen Anne; for St. John and Sir Simon Harcourt, the Attorney-General, immediately followed Harley out of office.

CHAPTER V.

1708—1710.

IN RETIREMENT.

The appointment of St. John's successor, as Secretary-at-War, though not to his place as Secretary of the Marines, showed sufficiently the influences at work to drive him from the Government. He was succeeded, with the Duke of Marlborough's approbation, by that rising Whig, that old schoolfellow, that hated enemy, the late member for Castle Rising, and then member for Lynn, the stolid, the ungraceful, the unconquerable Robert Walpole. Walpole had overcome his difficulties of elocution; and though he was never a polished, was already an effective speaker. During the years during which St. John had held office, the rivalry between them had not abated; and, however strange and unaccountable it might seem to the brilliant Mr. St. John, the contest between them seemed no longer unequal. Walpole was running him hard in the political race. He had the fullest confidence of the Whigs. Though not called, as St. John had been, the personal favourite of Marlborough, he was trusted by the General, and became his confidential correspondent; he managed to please the

duchess, and had, what St. John never appears to have done, acquired her favour; above all, he was the friend and pupil of Godolphin, was by him initiated into the business of office and all the mysteries of the Treasury, and, young as he was, soon became with the support of the Prime Minister, a kind of ministerial leader in the House of Commons.*

No wonder that St. John saw this rapid ascent to eminence with internal rage and bitter disappointment. It could not be pleasant to see his rival step into his shoes; still less to see him, under ministerial favour, rise higher than he had ever been able to do. Thoughts of vengeance occupied his mind; but for vengeance the time had not yet come. He took a step which surprised his contemporaries, and has perplexed his biographers; but for which it is not, perhaps, so very difficult to account as at first sight it has appeared.

Shortly after his resignation of the office of Secretary-at-War the Parliament was dissolved, and St. John did not offer himself to his constituents for re-election. There could of course have been no difficulty about the matter. The borough of Wootton Bassett, for which he had sat ever since he entered the House of Commons, was still the family borough; and their influence in the counties of Berkshire and Wiltshire rendered his election for a shire at any time a matter of choice.

Why, then, did he retire from Parliament? He knew well that though the Whigs had triumphed in the government, their position in the Court was in no respect improved. Harley had no sooner been dismissed than other pretensions were put forward;

* Coxe's Walpole, i. 23.

and the Queen was again engaged in a struggle against Godolphin and Marlborough. They wished her to make Lord Somers President of the Council, and, finding that at first they could not carry this point, sought to place him in the cabinet without any official appointment. But under the encouragement of her secret advisers Anne opposed that stolid and passive obstinacy so characteristic of her father and other members of her family. The disputes between her Majesty and Godolphin became more frequent than ever, and on one occasion threatened to last till midnight, had not Prince George come in at three o'clock in the afternoon, "Looking," Godolphin wrote to Marlborough, "as if it were dinner-time."* Of these constant altercations St. John was kept well informed, and he could easily afford to stand quietly by, and see what would be their natural result. In Parliament it was hopeless to struggle, for the nation, alarmed at an attempted invasion, had, at the new elections, declared itself strongly on the side of the Whigs. But there can be no doubt that the principal inducement to St. John in thus going voluntarily into a temporary retirement was his deep obligations to Marlborough. How could he all at once declare himself against the illustrious patron by whom he had been so long favoured and protected? St. John was placed in a position of peculiar delicacy; and, though perhaps not inclined to be very scrupulous, he felt the difficulties of his situation. The late Secretary-at-War could not immediately turn round, and attack the ministry which the great General supported, and of which, indeed, he was the most important member. It was, besides, uncertain how long

† Letter of Godolphin to Marlborough, June $\frac{1}{12}$, 1708.

the alliance between the Whigs and Marlborough might last; and it would not be prudent, without knowing what new political combinations might take place, to make the duke an enemy. Ambitious, therefore, and restless as St. John was, this was clearly a time when the best thing he could do was to do nothing.

He still, however, was ready to admit his debt of gratitude to Marlborough; and it does not appear that he considered the General as in any way to blame for his inevitable resignation of the place of Secretary-at-War. St. John retired into the country to Bucklersbury, the seat of his wife and his father-in-law, who had died in the previous year. He was, however, again summoned to Battersea by the death of his grandfather, Sir Walter St. John. While engaged in the necessary duties which this event entailed upon him, there came the news of the battle of Oudenarde, won in July by Marlborough over Marshal Vendome and the Duke of Burgundy. Again, as after Ramillies, St. John sent off a congratulatory epistle to the victorious General, and the letter contained a full acknowledgment of his obligations. He was still the same man, he professed the same opinions, as when he had been Secretary-at-War. "Your Grace," he wrote from London to Marlborough, "will give me leave to express in this manner a joy which is too great and too sincere to be silent.

"I must heartily congratulate this new addition to all the other glories of your life, which will be crowned, no doubt, by entirely reducing that power against which we have so long contended, and by giving to your own country and to all Europe that peace and security which no arm but yours could procure for them.

"The death of a grandfather brought me to this place, from whence I am preparing to return again to the country, in the midst of which retreat I shall inviolably preserve in my heart that gratitude for all your favours, that zeal for your service, and that true, unaffected love for your person which I have never knowingly departed from.

"I am, with the greatest respect, my Lord, &c.

"H. ST. JOHN." *

There is no hint in the letter about the war being carried on too long. France was to be entirely reduced. The arm of Marlborough could alone give peace and security to Europe. St. John breathes nothing but zeal for the general's service, and love for the general's person. These expressions will be worth remembering amid the events which are to come.

St. John returned into the country, telling all his acquaintances and friends that he had done with politics and ambition. He declared himself sick of the world, said that everything below was vanity and vexation of spirit, and that study in retirement should henceforth become the object of his devotion. The disappearance from the public stage of one who, by the brilliancy of his oratory in the House of Commons, and the profligacy of his private life, had been the talk, jest, and scandal of all men, excited general amazement and some ridicule. The Alcibiades of the senate now out-Timoned Timon. He spoke of himself as another Socrates, who had, amid the fierce conflicts of parties and the allurements of pleasure, too long neglected the whispering of his better genius;

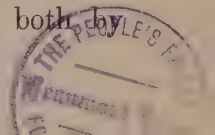
* St. John to Marlborough, Coxe MSS., July $\frac{5}{17}$, 1708.

but it had at length made itself heard; and henceforth, philosophy, divine philosophy, should be the sole mistress of his heart.

Much of this, especially in a young, worldly, and ambitious man of thirty, was pure affectation. But, as we shall see, it was thoroughly characteristic of St. John at all periods of his life. His boon companions knew not at first what to make of such extraordinary professions after such extraordinary conduct. They laughed heartily at finding their gay, riotous Harry among the philosophers. The wine-bibber and the sinner turned round upon them, and with some sententious maxim upon his lips, desired them henceforth to consider him as a philosopher and a saint. So far did St. John carry these philosophical professions, and so ready was he to bring them forth to all who sought his society, that, lively and entertaining as his conversation was, he began to be considered a bore. Just before he left town for Bucklersbury, a man of wit and fashion, whose ears had been fatigued by listening to one of his grave homilies about having done with the world, and specially about a noble motto that he was going to have written over the door of his summer-house, put into his hands some verses, which he assured him would be quite appropriate. St. John found the following lines, which, as he afterwards confessed, nearly drove him frantic:—

> "From business and the noisy world retired,
> Nor vexed by love, nor by ambition fired,
> Gently I wait the call of Charon's boat,
> Still drinking like a fish, and —— like a goat."

It was necessary for the purposes of biography to quote this choice effusion. St. John felt the satire keenly: the justice of it was acknowledged both by



himself and his friends. "I believe," said one, "the thing was true, for he had been a thorough rake."

It is remarkable that these lines, which I have hardly dared to quote, and thought of altering that their indelicacy might be somewhat veiled, were gravely written down by a clergyman of the church of England and sent in a kind of diary or journal to a young lady whom he professed to love, and whom biographers and poets have represented of singular modesty and virtue. They are preserved just as they stand in Swift's Journal to Stella; and that their point might not be lost to her, the divine adds, "I think the grave lines do introduce the last well enough."*

Never, surely, was there a stranger picture of human character than Swift's daily record of his hopes and fears, his love and his ambition, his small miseries, strange affectations, and tender communings. But it is not an elevating picture as we look upon it; neither the reverend doctor nor the young lady to whom this journal is really addressed rises in our estimation. We are almost inclined to apologize even for the licentiousness of St. John, when we find it plainly recorded for the instruction and amusement of this young lady by her middle-aged companion. The explanation that the manners of Queen Anne's reign were grosser than ours, and that people were much more accustomed to plain speaking, is not at all satisfactory. There are indelicate allusions enough in the Spectator, and in Lady Montague's letters; but nothing like what we find in this journal, written in confidence to a young lady for whom Swift professed the most platonic affection. Coarse jokes and coarse oaths, the plainest allusions and double meanings of the broadest kind,

* Journal to Stella, Jan. 13, 1711.

are all mingled together in this strange medley of wit, vanity, affection, and secret history. Nor is Stella at all behind the divine in similar allusions : she does not hesitate to perpetrate a nasty jest on the name of a lady with whom the doctor occasionally dined, and is gaily reproved by her correspondent, who observes in reply, "I was thinking about it all day and it quite spoiled my imagination." In fact, Swift and Stella evidently indulged habitually in such talk, and spoke to each other familiarly about those natural offices which Wilheim Meister represented it as the perfection of happiness for his mistress to perform in his presence.*

But though Swift and Stella, as well as the danglers about the chocolate-houses, and the dissipated politicians in the House of Commons, might laugh at the verses which were made on St. John's retirement, there can be little doubt that most of the time the young statesman spent at Bucklersbury was well employed. He was fully conscious of his own powers; and he was determined to assist them by all the advantages of study and reflection. He had formerly been too giddy, and latterly too busy, for any consistent literary pursuits; but he now eagerly devoured volume after volume, and, with his retentive memory, keen intelligence, and knowledge of the world, two years of steady reading was worth more to him than a much longer period would be to the majority of mankind. He always looked back to this time with satisfaction. It was the quietest, the most innocent, and perhaps the happiest portion of his life. Hope was as yet before him. Defeat, disappointment, disgrace, impeachment, exile, exclusion from the legislature, the hatred of foes, and the distrust of friends, had not yet come to teach him the lesson, that mere genius

* See Goethe's Wilheim Meister.

without some higher and ennobling principle, without some strong conviction, and some steady line of conduct, might only, in the stirring times in which his lot was cast, involve its possessor, and those who followed him, in a most disastrous shipwreck.

In his later years we occasionally find him alluding to his avocations at this tranquil season; and there is a mixture of sadness and regret in the manner in which he recalled these hours of retirement not without a kind of beauty and pathos. "Not only," he wrote to Lord Bathurst, "a love of study and a desire of knowledge must have grown up with us, but such an industrious application likewise, as requires the whole vigour of the mind to be exerted in the pursuit of truth, through long trains of ideas, and all those dark recesses wherein man, not God, has hid it. This love and this desire I have felt all my life, and I am not quite a stranger to this industry and application. There has been something always ready to whisper in my ear, whilst I ran the course of pleasure and of business,

'Solve senescentem mature sanus equum.'

But my genius, unlike the demon of Socrates, whispered so softly, that very often I heard him not, in the hurry of those passions by which I was transported. Some calmer hours there were; in them I hearkened to him. Reflection had often its turn, and the love of study and the desire of knowledge have never quite abandoned me."*

But it is not necessary to overrate St. John's attainments. The desultory manner in which his studies were pursued sufficiently accounts for the unsatisfactory character of many of his works. We may not be dis-

* Letter on the True Use of Retirement and Study.

posed entirely to agree with Lady Montague in the insinuation that he had not read half the volumes he delighted to allude to;* but the manner in which he frequently refers to Latin and Greek authorities is not that of an accomplished scholar. The quotations have frequently a suspicious smack of French translations rather than of the original versions. Indeed, though his memory was so tenacious, that he seldom forgot what he wished to remember, and allusions to the great authors of antiquity are prodigally scattered throughout his works, he never was a learned man. His information was, in many instances, obviously acquired at second hand; nor did he always make a judicious use of what he indirectly obtained. In his age it was customary to refer much more frequently than in ours to the ancient writers; and quotations and remarks which were then thought extremely clever are now considered only worthy of schoolboys. None of the writers of Queen Anne's reign abound more in such pedantry than Bolingbroke; and it is more surprising to meet with it in his pages than in those of most of his contemporaries, because he was not so much a professed author as a statesman and a man of business. But still, with all due deference to a very trite maxim, a superficial and commonplace knowledge of history and philosophy is better than no knowledge at all. St. John was much better employed with Plutarch and Seneca in the country retirement during the last two years of Godolphin's administration, than in lounging all day at the coffee-houses and chocolate-houses, and drinking all night at the taverns. Bucklersbury was but twenty-five miles from Windsor: he was near enough to the Court and the metropolis to be kept well acquainted

* Letter to the Countess of Bute.

with the varying aspect of public affairs; and as the game of intrigue was being played, letters and messages from his friend Harley followed rapidly upon each other, informing him, in his retreat, that the veil would soon be pulled aside, and show the Tories and themselves once more in power.

Prince George, by whom the dinner-hour had very recently been so anxiously expected, died on one of the last days of October. The pressure put on the Queen by the Whigs and Godolphin increased, and she was at last obliged to yield. Wharton was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and Somers, Lord President of the Council. The moderate Sir Richard Onslow was chosen Speaker of the House of Commons; but the Whigs, now an indisputable majority, were quite as unjust in determining the disputed elections as the Tories had been. Everything appeared to go smoothly for the Government; and before the session terminated in the April of 1709, a celebrated Act of Grace was proposed by Lord Sunderland, and passed in the usual manner.

The last campaign which was rendered famous by the battle of Oudenarde, had continued till after Christmas. It was one of the most scientific recorded in military history, and each event illustrated still more signally the genius and enterprise of Marlborough. After an arduous siege the important town and fortress of Lille was taken; Ghent was soon afterwards evacuated; and Bruges then immediately abandoned. All this, as Marlborough said, was according to his heart's desire. He told Godolphin that he hoped such successes would bring about peace by the summer; but he began, at the same time, to make frequent allusions to the next campaign.

The King of France was as sensible as Marlborough

of the successes of the allies. He at once set on foot an indirect negotiation with the Dutch, in the hope that by offering them enormous advantages, they would either induce the confederates to make peace or desert the alliance. Marlborough remained at the Hague almost to the close of the session of Parliament, watching keenly the manner in which the diplomatic overtures were received. This, indeed, was the period to which Bolingbroke always referred as that when the war entirely changed its aspect. Hitherto he maintained it had been just and necessary; but after this time it became unjust and unnecessary; and in the best, because the most practical of his letters on history, he many years afterwards reviewed this question with much statesmanlike ability.* It would not be easy to refute his arguments or to dissent from his conclusions.

Louis was unquestionably desirous of terminating the war. His offers were everything that the allies could fairly expect, or that a reasonable enemy could demand. On looking at the subject without passion or prejudice, it is impossible to deny that a peace, a satisfactory peace both to England and her allies, could in the spring of 1709 very easily have been concluded, had there been any disposition in Marlborough and his colleagues to bring those long hostilities to a close. But there was no such disposition. The close alliance with the Whigs had increased the inveteracy of the Cabinet. Marlborough was really the chief of the Grand Alliance; and to be at the head of so many states and potentates was flattering to his pride, as the immense gains he was receiving were tempting to his more sordid inclinations. An enormous bribe was directly offered him by the French minister, Torcy, who had

* See his Sketch of the History and State of Europe.

at length been himself sent to the Hague, in order that no chance of peace might be lost.

The best narrative of this, as well as of other important negotiations in which St. John was more immediately concerned, will be found in the Memoirs and Despatches of this Frenchman. Little Torcy, as Prior and Bolingbroke called him, was an admirable specimen of the French minister of the old school. In his eyes, Louis XIV. was something superhuman; he was a model of justice; he was a model of good faith. It had pleased God to chastise France with defeats and reverses; she was compelled to solicit peace from eight powers combined in strict alliance against her; but her illustrious monarch appeared only more venerable amid the disasters of his country. Torcy had had opportunities of becoming acquainted with England, where his father, having once been ambassador, and himself spent some of his earlier years, he was personally known to many of our leading public men. The Memoirs which he afterwards drew up in his retirement are invaluable to those who would enter into the diplomatic history of the great war, which was terminated by the peace of Utrecht. They are admirable for grace and even dignity of style; as well as for the abnegation of self which they display. Although written decidedly from the French point of view, they are in every respect the composition of a statesman and a gentleman.*

His account of his first interview with Marlborough, on the great general's return to the Hague in the May of this year, is singularly characteristic. In the victorious Englishman's hands were the great issues of

* These Memoirs were first published in 1756. They were reprinted in 1828 by Petitot et Monmerque in their Collection des Mémoires Relatifs à l'Histoire de France. It is to this edition that I shall so frequently refer.

peace or war. The French minister, almost a supplicant, was most courteous and complimentary; but he was fairly outdone by the humility of Marlborough. He was all protestations. He had indeed been the instrument of gaining important battles, but they were to be ascribed to Providence; for himself, he had no merit whatever. He was eloquent and even florid, declaring that he was heartily sick of the war, that he would give anything for peace. But England had gone mad; she would not hear reason; she believed she could ruin France; and all that he and her best advisers could do would not persuade her that it was then her interest to make a good peace. Referring to the son of James II., whom Torcy and he agreed to speak of as that subject of Queen Anne called the Prince of Wales, Marlborough declared that he would be glad to serve him, and that for his father he would readily have shed his life's blood. When the question was put, how the Prince of Wales was to be provided for, if he were expelled from France, "Ah!" said Marlborough, "you had better speak of that to Lord Townshend, whom I have brought with me. He is a very honest man, but he is a Whig; and he watches me closely; and don't be surprised if in his presence I express myself as an obstinate and prejudiced Englishman." But still Marlborough was most anxious to do all he could for the Prince of Wales. He was ready to do all he could even for Louis XIV. In the event of peace being concluded would his gracious Majesty, the most Christian king, grant him his protection? For Louis he had a personal affection. He could never forget that his first military experiences had been gained under Turenne, and he would be ready at any time to show his gratitude for so great an obligation. He pledged his honour; he

called heaven to witness the sincerity of his intentions. But notwithstanding his solemn protestations, notwithstanding the fervour of his pious vows, notwithstanding even the offer of the bribe of one million French livres, two millions, three millions, even four millions, which he passed off with a blush, and by at once changing the conversation, Louis XIV. and his faithful Secretary of State soon found that Marlborough was secretly thwarting their pacific proposals, and instigating the ministers of the allies in bringing forward all their unreasonable demands. Torcy was almost frightened at the sight of Marlborough making such earnest professions of peace, backed with such solemn appeals to God to witness his sincerity, while, in fact, he was doing everything he could do to continue the war; and the French minister, beaten at every point, could not but confess that in diplomacy, as in arms, the renowned Englishman had no equal. There was no getting hold of him. He was, in fact, the devil himself, quoting Scripture and outwitting his enemies.*

But the picture of Marlborough as a diplomatist would not be complete without a few touches being added which prove him to have been, after all, a mere mortal. The letters of this hard, worldly, fearless, unscrupulous man to his duchess are not only full of pious reflections, which show incontestably that Marlborough in his strange way did actually believe in the superintendence of Providence, but also, though he was now in his sixtieth year, are written with all the romantic affection of a youth of eighteen to the object of his idolatry. His love for the duchess was, after all, Marlborough's ruling passion, even when at the head

* See Torcy's Letter to Louis, May $\frac{22}{11}$, 1709, Mémoires, i. 262. See also the observations at page 281 of the same volume.

of the armies of Europe, or surrounded by ministers and sovereigns who were proud of his smile. He had other kindly feelings. In the midst of the bustle of a campaign, in the presence of the enemy, and while his mind was deeply agitated by the imminent danger of Godolphin and himself from the success of Harley's intrigues, the death of his fat coachman who had lived with him many years, the danger of his favourite cook, and the loss of his poor dog Turliar, called forth from him the most tender expressions of regret. As the emissaries of the King of France were striving so hard for peace, Marlborough, while secretly confounding all their politics, had also, as usual, an eye to the main chance. Peace might or might not be made; but he might at least make something out of the expectation. Before the treaty could be signed he would require an ambassador's canopy, or chair of state, as the plenipotentiary of his sovereign; and his friend the Lord Treasurer might give orders to the officer of the royal wardrobe to have it made in such a manner that it would serve for part of a bed at Woodstock when no longer required for diplomatic purposes. The expressions in the letter in which he instructs the duchess to look to this arrangement are inimitable. "You must," he wrote, "have in readiness the sideboard of plate, and you must let the Lord Treasurer know that, since the queen came to the crown, I have not had either a canopy or chair of state, which now of necessity I must have, so the wardrobe should have immediate orders; and I beg you will take care to have it made so that it may serve for part of a bed when I have done with it here, which I hope will be by the end of the summer, so that I may enjoy your dear company in quiet, which is the greatest satisfaction I am capable

of having."* The genius which had humbled the pride of Louis XIV. to the very dust, had, while these conferences at the Hague proceeded, insincere accents of peace on his lips, a sword in one hand, and the other in his breeches pocket.

It would have been well for Marlborough's reputation had these negotiations for peace succeeded. A Nemesis was attending on all his insidious rejections of every practical proposal; for that the English general could have made peace no impartial observer can entertain any reasonable doubt. Had Philip been allowed to enjoy peaceably the Spanish throne, of which it was clear that nothing but another long war could dispossess him, a sure basis would have been laid for every concession which the allies could have demanded. By giving up this point they could, with more justice, have been pertinacious on every other. But to insist on Louis putting his frontier fortresses into the hands of enemies who refused to guarantee him more than a suspension of arms for two months, and who, through the very places he would have placed in their power, must have renewed the war with more advantage than they could have obtained by its uninterrupted prosecution, clearly rendered all prospects of peace impossible. It is true that Louis XIV. in his misfortunes deserved little pity. The arrogant style in which he had professed to dictate the law to Europe, and especially the manner in which he had so long treated the Dutch, from whom he was at last obliged to solicit peace, deprived him of any right to sympathy or consideration. But in the position Marlborough was placed, with his power at Court undermined, and enemies watching greedily to take advantage of every error, or

* Coxe's Marlborough, iii. 32.

pretence of error, generosity would have been good policy. But instead of this, all he thought of was to protect himself by seeking to obtain an unconstitutional patent of general for life; and thus, sagacious and prudent as he believed himself, he was putting into the hands of his enemies weapons which they were only too ready to use.*

The failure of the negotiations for peace was itself employed to increase the prejudices which were so industriously instilled against Marlborough into Queen Anne's feeble mind. He was represented as a man of insatiable ambition, who would be content with nothing but the first place in the kingdom; and it was insinuated, most absurdly and falsely, that he was even aspiring to the crown. Louis XIV. having rejected the preliminaries containing such unreasonable propositions, and having appealed to his people, by making them acquainted with the extent of his offers for peace, the campaign was begun. In the course of the summer Tournay was besieged and taken. Mons was afterwards invested, and the siege of this town brought on the battle of Malplaquet, fought in September by Marlborough and Eugene against Marshal Villars, whom Louis had called the Invincible. The allies were victorious; but their success was dearly purchased. Marlborough wrote to the duchess that it was a very bloody battle, and to Godolphin that it was a very murdering battle. By this tremendous storming of Malplaquet the Dutch infantry were nearly destroyed,

* That Marlborough really did desire this patent of general for life, and made efforts to obtain it, can be shown by undeniable evidence. A letter from Mr. Craggs, of May 20th, and another from the Lord Chancellor Cowper, of June 23rd, in the Coxe MSS., establish the truth of this allegation, which might otherwise have been perhaps properly regarded as the invention of the general's unscrupulous assailants.

and many English homes were filled with mourning. The Whigs, of course, rejoiced at the victory; but the queen's secret advisers dwelt upon the enormous cost of life by which it had been obtained; and her Majesty refrained from writing her thanks to Marlborough.

But though the Queen was silent, St. John was not. It is evident that he had not yet abandoned all hopes of union with Marlborough; for once more he neglected not, from his retirement at Bucklersbury, to send forth his congratulations. He even intimated that his season of misanthropy was past, and that he was inclined to look more hopefully than when he wrote last on the world and its affairs. From the camp at Havres, where Marlborough, with his army, was covering the siege of Mons, the great general replied to St. John in a graceful and friendly epistle. "I am favoured," wrote Marlborough on the 14th of October, "with your letter of the 8th past, and am very much obliged to you for your congratulations and kind expressions on the late victory, the importance of which will, I hope, appear by its consequences, and that we shall enjoy the advantages of it. In the mean time I am very glad if that, or anything else I can do, may prove the means of adding to your satisfaction, and particularly that you begin again to entertain more favourable thoughts of the world, in which you are qualified to do so much good."

"Congratulations and kind expressions" then were, according to this undeniable testimony, the terms on which St. John and Marlborough were personally upon in the autumn of 1709. Yet nothing, however, is more certain than that the enemies of the Duke were then busily employed in working his overthrow, that they had all but succeeded in their endeavours, and that St. John was not only perfectly informed of all their pro-

ceedings, but was himself considered to be leagued with them in the closest alliance. In one of the last of those strange, unbecoming, and impolitic letters which the Duchess of Marlborough thought fit to write to the Queen we meet with the following taunting sentences, which show us St. John fully in the confidence, and partaking in all the schemes of Harley and Mrs. Masham :—"And who are those that you told me you had somewhere, but a few inconsiderable men, that have undertaken to carry Mrs. Masham up to a pitch of greatness from which she would be thrown down with infamy in a fortnight? What did some people in your service ride lately about from her to Mr. Harley at London, and thence to Mr. St. John's in the country, and then back again to her, and so again to London, as if they rid post all the while, but about some notable scheme, which, I dare swear, would make the world very merry if it were known?"

How reconcile the two contradictory letters? Why should St. John, while so fully involved in the intrigues against Marlborough, still desire to make the Duke believe that he was his friend? It would perhaps be wrong to impute such conduct to deliberate treachery. If St. John had any sincere admiration for any man, he most certainly had for Marlborough. He had long been fascinated by the valour, the genius, the success, and the accomplishments of the renowned warrior, whom he had regarded as his friend and protector. Court intrigues were proverbially uncertain in their results. That protection might still be needed, those professions of friendship might still be continued. It is evident that the opinions he subsequently expressed as to the ill policy of the war from the time when the negotiators for peace at the Hague were frustrated in

their object, had not yet been formed, or he could scarcely, with the Duke's friends, have exulted so highly at the victory of Malplaquet. France was still the enemy to be combated and subdued. The Whigs might be dismissed from the Cabinet, and even Godolphin driven from the Treasury, and yet Marlborough might, under their successors, still have the conduct of the war. This is evidently what St. John desired, not only at this time, but for long afterwards. He did not, however, foresee that, though the Duke was placable by nature, and would probably have entered into terms of accommodation, the enmity between the Duchess and Mrs. Masham admitted of no compromise, and that it was much easier to reconcile intriguing and ambitious statesmen than angry and jealous women.

After taking Mons the allied armies retired into winter quarters, and the Duke returned to England. The prospect gave him but little pleasure. On the afternoon of his arrival another contention between the Queen and her responsible advisers was scarcely terminated by another Whiggish appointment to the Board of Admiralty. A few days afterwards, on the 15th of November, Parliament met for the session. Marlborough was thanked by the two Houses; her Majesty, in the royal speech, dwelt on the glories of the campaign; six millions were readily voted for the service of the coming year; the number of troops was increased. The Court, Cabinet, and Parliament seemed united and resolved to carry on the war vigorously against the foreign enemy. But these flattering appearances were most deceptive; the ground was undermined, the mine was laid, a spark was applied; and a tremendous explosion followed.

It was resolved to prosecute Dr. Sacheverell, a high church clergyman of St. Saviour's, Southwark. In a sermon preached at St. Paul's Cathedral on the 5th of November, he had reflected strongly on the Revolution, maintained the doctrine of passive obedience, declaimed loudly on the dangers of the Church from false brethren, and of the false brethren it was strongly urged that some of the members of the Government were the chief. The sermon was itself a wretched performance; the divine who preached was neither eminent for his learning nor piety; but nothing less than a great state trial would satisfy the wounded feelings of Godolphin, whom the doctor had nicknamed Volpone, and of Sunderland, who was bent on vindicating what he considered to be Whig principles. This became the great work of the session. While the complaint was being made, resolutions were being passed, and the articles of impeachment prepared in the December of 1709, and the January of 1710, the cry that the church was in danger rose louder and louder from hundreds of pulpits, the oak-leaf, the badge of hereditary right, was everywhere seen in the hats of the multitude, and the current of feeling set in strongly in favour of the Tories and the High Churchmen. Emboldened by this display of popular passion, Queen Anne's secret advisers instigated her to take every opportunity of humiliating Marlborough. Against his wish, as Commander-in-chief, Lord Rivers was made Lieutenant of the Tower, and the Duke was ordered by her Majesty to confer a regiment that had become vacant on Mrs. Masham's brother, who was to be promoted over the heads of several older officers. Great changes were made in the Cabinet, and the Duke was hurried out of England as general plenipotentiary,

nominally that he might watch over the conferences for peace which had again been opened by the desire of the French king, but really that his presence might be no impediment to the further designs which Harley and his confederates had formed, and which they were impatiently waiting the opportunity to carry into execution.

It seems strange that with his influence over the Queen entirely gone, and with every incident proclaiming the increasing power of his enemies, he did not himself see the wisdom of concluding a peace. He startled the other plenipotentiaries by announcing his wife's disgrace at court; but no steps were taken by him to smooth the difficulties in the way of a successful negotiation. Knowing, indeed, that the failure of the last attempt had been laid to his charge, he did not openly interfere in these conferences, which were held at the little fishing village of Gertruydenberg, to explain the fourth and thirty-seventh of the preliminary articles, which, by the strong and utterly unreasonable conditions they sought to impose, were the great obstacles to peace. Even Torcy does not lay the principal blame on Marlborough for the rupture of this negotiation, but attributes the fault to Count Sinzendorf, the Austrian minister, and to the stolid determination of the Dutch deputies.* But with regard to these conferences at Gertruydenberg in the spring and summer of 1710, as with regard to the negotiations at the Hague in the spring and summer of 1709, there can be little question that Bolingbroke was right in his subsequent observations.† Had Marlborough and the English

* Torcy's Mémoires.

† Sketch of the History and State of Europe.

ministers really desired peace, peace might then have been made. But, to the disgrace of their diplomacy and foresight, all hopes of a successful negotiation seemed further off than ever. Louis's great objection was to the proposal that, if his grandson did not give up the Spanish throne in two months, the war should recommence, while all the places he had given up as a security, should still be held by his enemies, and turned against himself. Such a peace could, in fact, have been no peace. It was now, however, pretended to attain the desirable object by still more unreasonable conditions. During the previous year, when it was hinted that, in the event of Philip refusing to vacate the Spanish throne, Louis should unite his arms with the allies, and make war upon his own grandson, both Marlborough and Eugene disclaimed any intention of making so strange a proposal. Strange, however, as it was, the explicit acceptance of this condition, as a preliminary, was now insisted upon, as the only one on which a peace could be signed. The King of France even offered at last to contribute his share to the expenses of the war to drive Philip from Spain; but the plenipotentiaries, on the part of the allies, would listen to nothing but his full assent to this new preliminary, and also declared, as if this were not enough, that they reserved to themselves the power of bringing forward any ulterior propositions they might think necessary for their own security and to carry out the object of the alliance. With so many powers combined against France, each eager to obtain every possible demand, this was, in fact, to render all terms impossible, since, as soon as one was conceded, another could be brought forward. The acute statesmen and

warriors of the allies, with Marlborough and Eugene at their head, must have been perfectly aware of this result; but they appear scarcely to have expected the indignation which the thirty-seventh preliminary, as it was at last explained, produced in France, and wherever the party opposed to the war in England or on the Continent was making itself heard. Louis XIV. appeared in the character of a venerable monarch, ready to concede everything for the sake of peace, except the turning his sword against his own grandchild. No sovereign could be expected to agree to such a proposal; it outraged humanity more even than good policy. "If I am to continue the war," said Louis, "it is better to contend with my enemies than with my own people;" and everywhere, except in the camps and antechambers of the allied powers, the world applauded this resolution.

Before the final rupture of the conferences, Marlborough and Eugene were again in the field. They had concerted a plan of operations, which, if they could have been properly carried out, would have made the allies master of all the country from Arras to the sea, and have caused the English flag once more to float over the citadels of Calais and Boulogne. But the spectacle of misery which everywhere met the eyes of Marlborough in the French provinces, even appealed to his sympathies, steeled as they might be supposed to all the hardships of a war for the continuance of which he was mainly responsible. In villages he had left last year to go into winter quarters, he found, on his return, half the inhabitants dead of famine and fever; and the survivors looked as though they had just come forth from their graves. "It is so mortifying," he wrote to Godolphin, "that no

Christian can see it, but must with all his heart, wish for a peace." *

While the Duke was proceeding with the siege of Douay, every post from England brought him news of the disgrace of his friends and the triumph of his enemies. The Duchess's last interview with the Queen had been held on Good Friday; reproaches, protestations, tears, supplications, all were in vain; the discarded favourite, who had almost from girlhood shared in all Anne's joys and sorrows, parted with her for ever. At the same time, Marlborough learnt the appointment of the Duke of Shrewsbury to be Lord Chamberlain. A little later, the general was sought to be made the instrument of his own disgrace by being told by his sovereign to nominate Colonel Masham and Colonel Hill to be generals. But the dismissal, in June, from his post of Secretary of State, of Marlborough's son-in-law, the fierce and rancorous Whig Earl of Sunderland, and the appointment of the Tory Lord Dartmouth as his successor, was the most decisive blow struck at the power of the ministry, the ascendancy of the Whigs, and the influence of the duke. Dignity, propriety, prudence, all counselled Marlborough and Godolphin to resign offices which they held only in name, and to cease at once to be nominally responsible for the direction of affairs, all power over which had obviously passed into other hands. St. John and Harley, afterwards, used to boast over their wine, that while Godolphin, at this period was still in office, and seemed to the outward world to hold the reins of government, at their private assemblies in Mrs. Masham's apartments everything of import-

* Coxe's Marlborough, iii. 195.

ance was really decided. They often roared with laughter at the manner in which the Queen, by showing him attentions, and hinting that she might possibly require his services to form an administration, made a dupe of Lord Somers, and thus, through his influence, prevented the Whigs from acting decisively until the moment for action had passed away.* Such tactics were, indeed, little honourable either to the Sovereign or to those who counselled her to play so insidious a part. But they had their effect. Marlborough was advised not to give up his command, and the Whigs were prevented from resigning in a body. This was a fatal error. Every day the Lord Treasurer's position became more uncomfortable; his friends were one after another driven from office, and Harley's Tory adherents substituted in their places; and Godolphin was at last unceremoniously dismissed by a letter from the Queen, commanding him to break his staff, delivered by a lackey in the royal livery to his hall porter.

Even then, however, Harley did not cease his manœuvres. He professed his anxiety to form a moderate administration, in which some of the principal Whigs should be included. He declared that if the Lord Chancellor Cowper and Mr. Walpole, the Secretary-at-War, would only remain in the government with him, such inveterate Tories, as St. John and Harcourt, should only be admitted to subordinate offices. St. John undoubtedly heard of this offer; and, if sincerely made, it was not likely, even in this season of their common prosperity, to increase his gratitude to

* See Swift's Memoir on the Change of Queen Anne's Last Ministry, which corresponds with the remarks of the Duchess of Marlborough in an endorsement of a letter from Lord Somers.

Harley. In fact, during this summer, already Harley,* by his reserved ways, gave St. John reason to complain. Though everything seemed so prosperous, the two confederates were for some time not on the best of terms, and St. John, being the subordinate, was obliged to put up with Harley's fits of coldness. But his temper was little suited for bearing meekly such annoyances. Walpole and Cowper adhered firmly to their party. Finding that all overtures were unavailing, and that his enemies were not to be divided among themselves, Harley threw off the mask, the Queen treated Somers with rudeness, and on the 19th of September, this Whig chief, with the Duke of Devonshire and Henry Boyle, was dismissed. The Earl of Rochester succeeded Somers as President of the Council, the Duke of Buckingham was appointed Lord Steward instead of the Duke of Devonshire; and in place of Mr. Boyle, Mr. St. John at last received the seals as Secretary of State.

* The Stuart Papers fully confirm the rumour that Harley was reluctant to appoint Bolingbroke to a higher office than he had formerly occupied.—See also Letter to Lord Orrery, May 18, 1711.—Bol. Corr., i. 132.

CHAPTER VI.

1710—1711.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

The appointment excited little surprise. Though the new Secretary of State had been out of Parliament for more than two years, though, according to Mr. Canning's saying, even the most eminent politician, when once he disappears from the public scene, is never missed, and though St. John, when he gave up the representation of Wootton Bassett, was scarcely thirty years of age, and was but thirty-two when he was placed as Secretary of State in one of the highest and most responsible offices in the service of the Crown, yet so great had been the impression produced by his genius, activity, and party zeal, during the eight years he had sat in parliament and the four years he had been Secretary-at-War, his pretensions to fill the great post he was at last placed in were generally admitted. Admiration more than astonishment, was the sentiment generally raised by his sudden elevation. The impression made upon Swift, on his first acquaintance with the Secretary, very shortly after he had entered office, is remarkable. "I am thinking," the doctor wrote to Stella, "what a veneration we used to have for Sir William Temple because he might have

been Secretary of State at fifty; and here is a young fellow hardly thirty in that employment." *

But St. John was not only an eminent member of a cabinet composed of leading politicians: he was one out of the two principal ministers who were understood to be in fact the government. His name was coupled with that of Harley; the administration was called theirs; according to Walpole's characteristic simile, the name of the ministerial firm was Harley and St. John. Abroad or at home their colleagues were seldom mentioned. The two chiefs were everything; they dictated the measures, they guided the deliberations, of the cabinet.

At that time there were but two Secretaries of State, one having charge of what was called the Northern, and the other of the Southern department. But St. John was considered the Secretary of State; he was spoken of everywhere as Mr. Secretary St. John; the other Secretary, Lord Dartmouth, a plain honest man, was scarcely ever thought of. Lord Dartmouth was not a party leader; Lord Dartmouth was not an orator; besides, Lord Dartmouth could neither express himself fluently nor intelligibly in French. Even Harley's French was bad. But St. John could speak this language of diplomacy and fashion with much facility and correctness; he alone could communicate readily and properly with the foreign ministers; he became, therefore, with the charge of the Northern department, what is now called Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.†

A position of greater eminence and trust than the young man of thirty-two, suddenly found himself placed in, a British subject has seldom occupied. This was a

* Journal to Stella, Nov. 11, 1710.

† Respecting the French of Lord Dartmouth, Harley, and St. John, see Torcy's Mémoires, ii. 47; and the Stuart Papers: Macpherson, ii. 530 and 532.

time of war; it was a time when the English arms had been by fortune and genius raised to the zenith of glory and success; eight allied powers were at the command of the victorious Captain-General; another campaign threatened to lay the road open directly to the capital of the old enemy. England was in a position to dictate a peace almost on any terms; and her Foreign Secretary must necessarily be the principal person to superintend and carry on those great negotiations involving the most important interests of so many states and empires. But this was not only a time of war; it was also the time of a disputed succession. Queen Anne's health was shaken; she became stouter every day, and every day she became less fitted for taking active exercise; the utmost extent of physical exertion of which she was capable was to drive rapidly in a one-horse chaise, with large wheels, after the staghounds at Windsor.* Subject as she was to attacks of gout, and habitually indulgent as she was in all the pleasures of the table, her body became most gross, and, as there was no restraining her Majesty's propensity to gourmandise, it was certain that at best she could last but a very few years. Any day the throne might suddenly become vacant, and on such an event, the ministers in office must have almost the fate of England in their hands. On them it would all but depend whether the provisions of the Act of Settlement should be carried out, and the Brunswick dynasty seated on the British throne. They might almost make their own terms either with the House of Hanover or the House of Stuart; and the Foreign Secretary especially, through all the means of communication he possessed with the

* See Swift's description of Her Majesty, driving like another Jehu, in his Journal to Stella.

continental courts, and as the ablest and most ambitious man of his party, must stand in the most commanding of all situations. It was in his power to do much good, or much evil. By acting in a noble, patriotic, and statesmanlike manner, he might draw even his adversaries towards him, lay the foundations broad and deep of his own power, and secure the gratitude of all future generations.

But if we inquire closely as to the spirit in which the new Secretary of State and his friends, who were called upon to act such a part at such a time, came into office, we shall be not a little disappointed. We at once sink from the poetry of politics into very plain prose. On this subject, St. John, the most unexceptionable of authorities, has been more than usually explicit, and his candour, at least, is praiseworthy. "I am afraid," he afterwards wrote, "that we came to court in the same disposition as all parties have done; that the principal spring of our actions was to have the government of the State in our hands; that our principal views were the preservation of this power, great employments to ourselves, and great opportunities of rewarding those who had helped to raise us, and of hurting those who stood in opposition to us. It is however true, that with these considerations of private and party interest there were others intermingled, which had, for their object, the public good of the nation—at least what we took to be such." * In other words, St. John and his friends, by his own confession, came to power at this great crisis, in the first place to serve themselves and their party, and then, if they could without injury to their own selfish interests, serve their country. Without entering into the question whether this is the rule of

* Letter to Sir William Windham.

conduct adopted by all parties, as he leaves it to be understood, the admission is at least conclusive against himself. Perhaps the sequel may show that the complete defeat and ruin which overtook Bolingbroke and his party, proceeded mainly from this utterly secondary view of the public interests, in comparison with that of their own, which he deliberately avows to have been their guiding principle.

The fact was, that disguise it as they might endeavour to do from themselves, this celebrated ministry was established on no solid foundation. The means by which Harley and St. John had entered office were fatal to independence of mind, or to any enlarged and generous regard for the public interests. Female intrigue, and the cry that the Church was in danger, had made Harley Chancellor of the Exchequer, and St. John Secretary of State; and they found that on these influences they were still obliged to depend. It was never pretended that Mrs. Masham had any public object in view in outwitting the Duchess of Marlborough, and supplanting her in the sovereign's favour; and Harley, when he found himself chief minister, appeared to know as little what to do with the power he had so insidiously acquired as his feminine accomplice. Of Sacheverell, the other wretched instrument, by which the ministers had obtained office, they were themselves positively ashamed;* and though it suited their purpose to taunt their political opponents with designs to destroy the Church, both Harley and St. John could not but confess that they were themselves scarcely the most fitting champions of the establishment. Nothing disgusts a discriminating student of those times more than the aspersions which Swift, the

* See Journal to Stella.

greatest literary advocate of this ministry, constantly casts upon Somers and the Whigs for their tolerant principles. "It was the practice," wrote the doctor, "of those politicians to introduce such men as were perfectly indifferent to any or no religion, and who were not likely to inherit much loyalty from those to whom they owed their birth;"* as if Harley's ancestors had been remarkable for their loyalty, and as if the author of The Tale of a Tub, and his friend St. John, were most earnest, pious, and exemplary members of the Church of England. All this was miserable cant; the men who used it knew it to be miserable cant; and they expected that their readers would be as insincere and shameless as themselves.

The first question which Harley and St. John had to determine, while the new Secretary of State was yet on the threshold of office, was whether they should or should not continue the existing parliament? To prevent the premature dissolution of the House of Commons, in which their party predominated, had been the principal reason why Somers and the Whig leaders had to the last clung to office, and advised Marlborough not to throw up his command. Their moderation was useless. By the retirement of Cowper and Walpole, and the appointment of St. John to high office, it became clear that Harley had broken entirely with the Whigs, and that a new Parliament was inevitable. The enthusiasm with which Sacheverell was everywhere received, as he made a more than royal progress into Wales to a benefice that the new ministers had given him, left no doubt in the state of the public mind what the result of the elections would be. Late in September the old Parliament was dissolved by pro-

* History of the Four Last Years of the Queen.

clamation, and a new one summoned. The Whigs were nearly everywhere beaten; the only member of the party whose popularity seemed uninjured in the storm, being the gentle and humane Addison, whose election passed undisputed for Malmesbury. Their majority entirely disappeared. Some said the Whigs would have only a third, others only a sixth of the new House of Commons.

The great party contest occupied much of the month of October. St. John had two elections on his hands, that of his borough, which, of course, gave him no trouble, and that for his county, to which it was necessary he should personally attend. He obtained the Queen's leave of absence from court. For a time both business and correspondence were suspended, that he might go into the country to secure his own election, and assist those of his friends. With so deep a stake on the game, he, of course, threw himself into the thickest of the fight. He returned to London member for Berkshire.*

Resuming his official duties, he wrote eagerly to different correspondents whom he was establishing throughout Europe. One of St. John's characteristics as a statesman was, indeed, the immense mass of correspondence, both official and private, that he managed to carry on. An unpublished letter to Mr. Dayrolles, then Secretary at the Hague, but who was thence expected to go to Geneva, was written from Whitehall shortly after the Secretary's return from his election for Berkshire. This Mr. Dayrolles, or more correctly D'Ayrolles, having been obliged by the other party, was not a favourite of St. John, who was for months afterwards in no haste to send him on his

* See the Bolingbroke Corr., i. 3–5.

mission to Geneva, calling him, with an appointment of twelve hundred a year, an old woman, whose talents no time and no opportunities of improvement could raise above the level of a domestic servant. The letter is as follows:—

"Sir,

"Since my last to you, I have received your letters of the 7th, 11th, and 14th inst., N.S.; but having no commands from her Majesty, nor any returns to make but my thanks for the news you are pleased to send me, I hope you will more easily excuse my not troubling you with an answer to every particular letter.

"I am glad that what I wrote in mine of the 27th of October was to your satisfaction. When I receive any orders from her Majesty relating to your commission to Geneva, I shall not fail to signify them to you.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"H. St. John."*

This was terse and polite, but not very satisfactory to an anxious diplomatist waiting for orders to depart.

Four days after this letter was despatched from Whitehall the new Parliament assembled. Some of the Whigs still retained a hope of seeing their old speaker, Smith, re-elected. But the time of the rival whom he once defeated was now come; William Bromley, the grave and respectable member of the University of Oxford, a friend of St. John, and, like him, numbered among the principal members of the

* Additional MSS., 12,099.

Tory party, was chosen without opposition. The queen, in her royal speech, alluded to her desire to continue the war vigorously, particularly in Spain; and this was looked upon as a slight to the Duke of Marlborough, whose great military genius had been so long engaged in Flanders. The address to her Majesty from the Lords was a curious composition, and had evidently been drawn up by some Tory novices in that particular department of literature: the last sentence needlessly began by informing the queen that her loyal peers had nothing more to add. The address from the Commons was also remarkable; but the style was much superior, and in some of its oratorical reiterations, and eloquent amplifications, bore unmistakable evidence of St. John's pen.*

Another production during this eventful period excited much more attention. A few weeks before Godolphin's fall, a weekly political paper, entitled The Examiner, had been started by the chiefs of the Tory party, to justify the impending changes, and to increase the popular clamour against the Whigs. The first twelve papers, extending over the months of August, September, and October, were written with considerable but unequal ability by the literary champions of the Tories, principally Dr. Friend, Atterbury, Prior, and St. John himself. It would, at this time, be impossible to ascribe each publication to the respective authors; and, indeed, many of them were evidently joint contributions of all the wit and sarcasm at the command of these friendly associates. One paper, however, the tenth of the series, stood out prominently from the rest, and became widely celebrated

* See this address in the Parl. Hist., vi. 930. The address of the Lords will be found at page 928 of the same volume.

as Mr. St. John's Letter. It was a vehement but anonymous attack on the conduct of the war and the Duke of Marlborough, with some very fierce observations on the Duchess, who is not very gallantly reviled in language worse even than her own style of coarse invective. Of the authorship of this letter there can be no doubt; whether, however, it deserves all the praises lavished upon it by some of Bolingbroke's admirers, is questionable; those who read it with impartial attention, will probably think with Walter Scott, who had certainly no prejudices against St. John, or the political cause he supported, that this famous letter has been "the object of much exaggerated encomium."

One of the leading arguments which St. John first produced in this paper, and repeatedly used in writing on the same question in his subsequent retirement, was, that while the interests of England were merely secondary in the war, and, according to the terms of the grand alliance, she engaged in it only as one of a confederacy, she no sooner became embarked in the contest than she threw herself heartily into it as a principal whose existence was staked on the issue. It is difficult to understand how a great nation can, when it embarks in a war, refrain from embarking in it as a principal. Surely, if England fights at all, one of the recognised principles of political wisdom is, that she ought to fight with her whole strength. Nothing is so cruel, bloody, inefficient, and inglorious, as a little war. When a great power is once involved in a contest of such a nature, it is idle to talk about a secondary interest: this may be a reason for keeping out of the struggle altogether; it is none for carrying it on with only a part of the means at the command of the government. Looser language than

St. John used on this subject was never employed by any statesman.

But had England then only a secondary interest in the war of the Spanish succession? or could there ever be a great contest for the balance of power, and for the inheritance of a great empire, extending over not only some of the fairest parts of Europe, but of some of the noblest provinces of America, in which England, by any reasoning, might be shown to have only a secondary interest? She was, in fact, the life and soul of the great confederacy: to keep it together she had made great sacrifices both to the republic of Holland and the Emperor; and there seemed something much more statesmanlike in thus magnanimously bearing, in a season of victory, with some of the shortcomings of the allies, than in jealously carping at their efforts, and railing at their selfishness. She had at least the gratification of having brought down to her feet the power and pride of her great rival; of having throughout the Continent raised the renown of the English arms to a height which it had never reached for many centuries; of having made the name of an Englishman respected and feared throughout every country in the world. A more injudicious proceeding than for the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to begin his duties at such an important crisis, by anonymous attacks in a published letter, on each and all of the allies of England, could scarcely be imagined. If the letter became known to be his composition, what would be the consequence? That distrust must be sown where there had formerly been union and confidence, and that France, instead of being ready to accept peace on any terms, must again raise her head, and under every

advantage once more begin the insidious game of her diplomacy. The authorship of the letter did indeed become known; and it certainly did not make the astute French sovereign offer conditions of peace again, as St. John hoped, at all resembling those which had been rejected at the conferences of Gertruydenberg. Every power engaged with others in a war, naturally thinks its own part more burdensome than those of the rest of the allies. It is not surprising to find that the same kind of arguments which St. John employs to persuade England that she was hardly treated by the other members of the great confederacy, were employed by the French minister at the Hague in 1709, to induce Holland to desert the alliance and make a separate peace with France.* Torcy said to the Dutch deputies on the part played by their republic, very much though not quite so eloquently what St. John said in this letter on the part of England. "We engaged as confederates, but we have been made to proceed as principals; principals in expense of blood and treasure, whilst hardly a second place in respect and dignity is allowed us. . . . Britain is expected to remain exhausted of men and money, to see her trade divided among her neighbours, her revenues anticipated to future generations, and to have this only glory left her, that she has proved a farm to the bank, a province to Holland, and a jest to the whole world." St. John, hesitating not, however, to descend from these great political questions to assail

* "Et véritablement," wrote the French minister of Holland in 1709, "cette république tenoit depuis longtemps une conduite directement contraire à ces anciennes maximes. La plus inviolable pour elle étoit autrefois, de faire en sorte que la balance fût égale entre les principales puissances de l'Europe: elle s'en étoit tellement écartée, qu'elle employoit maintenant ses richesses, et les épuisoit, pour faire pencher cette balance, ou plutôt l'entraîner, en faveur de la maison d'Autriche."—Torcy's Mémoires, i. 121.

the Duchess of Marlborough, openly calls her an insolent woman, the worst of her sex, a fury, a plague. "Now, thanks be to God," he exclaims, "that fury who broke loose to execute the vengeance of heaven on a sinful people is restrained, and the royal hand is reached out to chain up that plague."

Earl Cowper, the great Whig lawyer, who was not to be seduced from his allegiance to his party by all the disingenuous arts of Harley, replied to his Tory manifesto. His defence was addressed to the editor of the Tatler, Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., a name which Swift had made famous in his ludicrous assaults on Partridge, the almanack maker, and which Steele had adopted to give greater distinction to this the first series of those periodical essays then in course of publication. It was impossible to answer completely all that St. John had urged against neglecting to bring about a peace, when it might have been so easily obtained at the Hague in 1709, or at Gertruydenberg in the last summer; but in reply to the injudicious taunts about the Whigs depending at court on feminine intrigue for support, when their adversaries had risen to power by the most despicable feminine intrigue ever known in British history, there was much to be said, which the Earl did not neglect to say with keenness and spirit. Had he read the congratulatory letters which St. John had written to Marlborough after the victories of Ramilies and Oudenarde, and that respecting the battle of Malplaquet, even so recently as during the preceding year, he might have personally retorted on his brilliant adversary with still more damaging effect. St. John, it appeared, now thought that our great victories over France had long been great misfortunes, and that peace ought to have been made in

1706, when both himself and Harley were in office, and therefore responsible for the continuance of the war.*

Peace, however, was the great necessity of the new administration. The ministers, as Bolingbroke afterwards candidly declared, thought that to put an end to hostilities was for the interest of their country, and that at least both to themselves as well as to all mankind, the termination of the contest appeared to be the interest of their party.† It was the only means by which the Duke of Marlborough could be reduced to the rank of a subject. It was the only means by which the ministers could be rendered independent of the monied interest, including the Bank and the East India Company, which were principally in the hands of the Whigs, and the growing importance of which was watched with so much dislike and indignation by the country gentlemen. From the first moment of their accession to office, to bring about a peace as soon as ever the opportunity offered, and to make an opportunity if it did not of itself speedily present one, was the fixed determination of Harley and St. John.

But when the vessel has long been steadily sailing with a full impetus in one direction, it is not so easy, whatever may be the desire of the pilot, all at once to bring it about, and sail on quite an opposite track. For a short while it seemed that everything would go on as usual. One of St. John's earliest letters as Secretary of State was to Buys, the Pensionary of Amsterdam. With the exception of the President, or Grand Pensionary, Heinsius, the devoted friend and servant of King William, and still firmly attached to Marlborough

* St. John's Letter and Earl Cowper's Reply are both printed in Scott's edition of the Somers' Tracts, xiii. 71 and 75.

† Letter to Sir W. Windham.

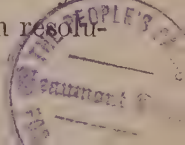
and Eugene, Buys was the leading statesman of the Dutch Republic. He had been several times on missions to England, was well acquainted with all our public men, and, with thoroughly Dutch pertinacity, steadily adhered to the interests of Holland. A very grave, and somewhat pompous official, through his solemn exterior the little outpourings of human vanity were frequently seen to make their way. He prided himself on his eloquence, had, much to Torcy's annoyance, made long speeches at the late conferences at the Hague, and in his stolid Flemish style was quite a match for the graceful, courteous, and refined French minister. St. John, anxious to gain the confidence of Buys, indulged in professions of fidelity to the cause of the allies, and of love for Holland, very different from what he expressed in his letter to The Examiner. "I have always," he wrote to Buys in French, "looked upon the interests of our countries as inseparable. It is a principle which has never been contradicted since your Republic was founded, that when our sovereigns have pursued the true interests of the kingdom, they have been the friends of Holland; and that we have never been your enemies but when our Court had designs as pernicious to us as to the Lords, the States General. These are the maxims which shall govern my conduct, and I hope that with your good advice I shall be able to render these dispositions in some manner useful to the interests of both nations."* Admirable words! How comforting to the alarmed Pensionary of Amsterdam, trembling at what he had heard to be the designs of Harley and St. John! Could the Whig Somers, or his pupil the Whig Walpole, say more?

* This is the first letter in the Bolingbroke Correspondence.

There was at that time a merchant of Amsterdam by name John Drummond. He was a native of Scotland, a Tory, and had had intimate relations with the leaders of the Tory party in the time of the Godolphin administration, when to the outer world St. John and his friends had but little prospect of power. This gentleman entered into an intimate correspondence with St. John from the moment of his accession to office, and began to be considered as an unavowed but most confidential agent of the ministry. St. John frequently told him that he was of more use than any of the British ambassadors abroad; and, indeed, the Secretary wrote more freely to him than to any of the recognized servants of the British Crown. But even to this trusted agent St. John at first thought fit to declare his determination to remain true to Holland and to the Grand Alliance. It seemed that whatever change there might be in the domestic policy, there was to be none in the foreign policy of the new administration. "You may venture to assure everybody," St. John wrote to this Mr. Drummond, "that credit will be supported, the war prosecuted, the confederacy improved, and the principle in which we engaged, pursued as far as possible. Our friends and enemies both will learn the same lesson, that however we differ about things purely domestic, yet we are unanimous in those great points which concern the present and future happiness of Europe."*

To M. Roberthon, the private secretary of the Elector of Hanover, and to Lieutenant-General Cadogan, the favourite of Marlborough, the Secretary's early correspondence was in similar terms. "I commend you extremely," he said to Cadogan, "for your firm resolu-

* Corr., i. 4.



tion of adhering to that great man, to whom you have so many obligations; and I dare say you will serve him with sober and solid marks of your gratitude—not with that empty impotent noise by which some people have rendered themselves, if possible, more despicable than they were before." St. John and Cadogan had been old friends. They had been rivals for Marlborough's protection; to him they had both been under great obligations; they had both been especially called his favourites; but, notwithstanding St. John's kindly expressions, their paths were now separate, and they were to become very like enemies.

In a very few months afterwards St. John's conduct formed a sad comment on these other words in the same letter of the Secretary: "Whatever effects the revolutions of parties have on others, they have none on me with respect to personal friendship. Though measures are to be kept with party, yet friendship may be preserved too; and there is no need of sacrificing to political schemes all the duties of private life."

On the course in which St. John was embarked, it was not easy to act up to these professions. It cannot be too plainly inculcated that, notwithstanding the high professions of devotion to their country and the Church, in which the ministers indulged, the whole politics of that time begun and ended in a ladies' quarrel. To the outward world the Secretary and his friends might seem directing the politics of Europe, by giving the law to the Court and Parliament, to generals and sovereigns; but, in many respects, they were the helpless instruments of feminine caprice. The Queen was not so easily governed as she had been. Harley and Mrs. Masham had so long advised her to have a will of her

own, when she spoke against the manner in which she had been enslaved by Godolphin and Marlborough, that when she had become, as they told her, Queen indeed, she began to act with a kind of unreasoning obstinacy that was very peculiar. Many things Mrs. Masham and the ministers could get her to do, but there were some with which no arguments they used, and neither coaxing nor flattery, could induce her to comply. She grew jealous, suspicious, and sullen, and would have her own way.*

In his heart, there is no doubt that St. John really would, at this time, have been glad to come to terms of accommodation with Marlborough. But it was impossible to reconcile the Duchess and Mrs. Masham, or the Duchess and Queen Anne. The letter in The Examiner was not the only evidence of hostility the new ministers showed to the great General who had so long dictated the policy of England. Much meanness was displayed in the manner in which the grants from the Treasury for paying the workmen at Woodstock were suspended; so that the building which was to be a monument of national gratitude to the hero of Blenheim, was very nearly becoming a national disgrace. Some time afterwards three of his most devoted officers, Macartney, Meredith, and Honeywood, were dismissed from the service for drinking confusion to the new ministry; and the example, as St. John himself declared, was intended to be a warning to the whole army. At the same time the enmity between the Queen and the Duchess became more bitter than ever, and the Duchess, much to the Secretary's indignation,

* This is very plainly confessed by Swift in his Memoirs relating to the change in Queen Anne's ministry: and he was himself a living instance of her Majesty's inflexibility. It is well known that all the influence of Harley, St. John, and Mrs. Masham could not make him a bishop.

threatened to publish the letters which her sovereign, under the name of Mrs. Morley, had formerly written to her beloved Mrs. Freeman, when neither of them foresaw the unfortunate termination of this strange intimacy. "I had almost forgot to mention to you," wrote St. John to his friend Drummond, "an instance of the admirable temper in which the great man is likely, at his return, to find his wife. Among other extravagances she now declares that she will print the queen's letters to her—letters written while her Majesty had the good opinion of her, and the fondness for her, which her insolent behaviour, since that time, has absolutely eradicated."*

It is obvious that this state of things could not last. As the Duke's return to England, from Flanders, was daily expected, the Duchess's final dismissal from all her employments at Court was decided upon. How Marlborough would conduct himself under these altered circumstances was the object of much speculation between St. John and his confidential correspondent, the Amsterdam merchant. The Secretary had, however, made up his mind how to act, and his determination was characteristic. Nothing but the Duke's absolute submission to his enemies would satisfy St. John. He must give up the Whigs altogether; he must submit himself in everything to the queen; he must implicitly obey her ministers; he must not presume to have a will of his own in any thing. Neutrality between the two parties was not enough. His grace must enter into distinct and positive engagements to co-operate heartily in all the policy of the Tories; and not only to put up with his wife's disgrace, but himself to get rid of her. Such were the terms which the Secre-

* Letter from Whitehall, Nov. 18, 1710.

tary, through his agent, Drummond, presumed to dictate to Marlborough, whom a few short months before he had enthusiastically professed to all but worship.

Marlborough's career had been tortuous enough. He might have reason to dread an investigation into all his pecuniary transactions with the allies; he might fear that his former correspondence with the court of St. Germains might be revealed to the world; he could not, perhaps, afford summarily to reject with indignation such insulting proposals: but he was not quite such a fool as to agree to them. To abandon the Whigs utterly, and to submit in all things to the Queen and her ministers: what did this really mean but to throw himself not only at the feet of Harley and St. John, but to submit in all things to two women, that weak sovereign, whose mind, as the duke, who knew her well, said, was white paper, ready to receive any idea which those whom she trusted thought fit to impress upon it; and that wretched Abigail of the bedchamber, whom the duchess had herself introduced to court, and who hated her former patrons and relations, the Marlboroughs, with the rancorous hatred of one who had repaid her benefactors with the blackest treachery and ingratitude? Surely this was a little too much to ask. Whatever might be his failings, the greatest general who had ever led the British troops to victory, and who had filled the world with his renown, had not fallen quite so low as to receive on bended knees, and obey without any dispute, all the insolent caprices of this Mrs. Masham and her confederates. The Duke replied, quietly and courteously, that though he would not make himself a centre of opposition to the government, he could scarcely be expected altogether to give up his old friends.

When St. John was informed of his grace's answer he became very angry. Indignation quite ran away with his pen as he commented on the words, old friends, which the Duke had used. Were not the Tories his old friends? Who stood by him when he was disgraced by King William? Who put him and Godolphin in power during the first years of the Queen's reign? Who allowed themselves to be most shamefully betrayed and driven from Court by the two chiefs they had so much trusted? Talk about abandoning his old friends indeed! Let the duke give up his new friends, and return to his old friends; not that they needed his protection: they could do him more harm than he could do them good.*

It is obvious from the tone which St. John adopted, that he felt the position of the government secure. Marlborough could not have followed such advice, or St. John have given it, except on the supposition that the return of the Whigs to power was impossible. Such appears to have been the deliberate opinion of the Secretary. He had no fear of a day of reckoning. Nemesis was not the divinity which he thought of worshipping. He was securing himself no retreat; he was providing for no evil day. The Whigs had fallen in such a storm of popular fury, that it seemed they never could rise again. Yet the whole history of England, from the reign of Charles II., when the two parties first began to be decidedly established as candidates for office, might have taught a prudent statesman the wisdom of not trusting to these sudden ebullitions of popular passion, and of not thinking that his adversaries were destroyed because they were

* See the Letters to Mr. Drummond, of Nov. 28 and Dec. 22, 1710.—Corr., i. 17 and 30.

for the moment beaten. Even St. John's own experience, and that of his friend Harley, might have taught him this lesson; but it was all in vain.

It is remarkable that another of the greatest political writers, and one of the shrewdest observers of that age, had formed the same erroneous conclusion from those events, in which he was also deeply interested. Swift had come from Ireland while the ministerial changes were in progress, to press the granting of the first fruits to the Irish Church, in a similar manner to that in which they had been conferred on the English establishment. His old friends the Whigs, for whom he had written the somewhat pedantic History of the Dissensions in Athens and Rome, had not promoted him; the Lord Lieutenant Wharton had neglected a letter of recommendation from Somers; the Vicar of Laracor had been received very coldly by Godolphin. Burning with vengeance, on some civilities which had been shown him by Harley, who introduced him to St. John, and saw the literary services which the author of the Tale of a Tub could render in this time of fierce party strife, Swift had cast in his lot with the Tories, and had at the thirteenth number begun to write regularly the Thursday weekly paper, The Examiner, which had hitherto depended on the desultory contributions of the chiefs of the party, some of whom, like St. John, had no leisure for regular periodical composition. Forgetting that he once defended the Whig statesmen, when they had been impeached, Swift undertook to libel them all round, and appeared ready to recommend another impeachment. The passions of the moment blinded his judgment and subdued his reason as much as they had done the mind of St. John. He, too, believed that

the day of the Whig domination had ceased for ever. He wrote confidentially to Stella, "They are done with this kingdom, I think, at least for our time."*

And all the overweening confidence of both Swift and St. John, depended on the life of a valetudinarian queen, whom, from her love of good eating, an overburdened stomach and a fit of indigestion might any day send into the grave.

It was late in December before Marlborough arrived in England. He had two interviews with the Secretary. St. John renewed in person the strong representations, or rather the system of bullying, which he intimated in his private letters to Mr. Drummond, and other communications, of course intended to be shown to the duke. He undertook to act, as far as Marlborough was concerned, the part of a candid friend. This young Secretary of thirty-two gave his illustrious friend and patron, the victorious general of sixty, a long political lecture on the difference between the Whigs and the Tories, and rated him soundly on the mistake he had made in abandoning the party which was so zealous for the church and the monarchy, and connecting himself with the Whigs, who, St. John assured him, never could, except under very peculiar circumstances, be so strong as their opponents, and were obliged to depend for support on the dissenters and the new-fangled monied interest.* To all this, Marlborough, who was politeness itself, listened with an outward show of complacence. But

* Journal to Stella.

† See Coxe's Marlborough, iii. 350, and St. John's Letter to Drummond, of Jan. 5–16, 1711. St. John's own account of what he said is, "It would be tedious to recapitulate all that passed; in general, I spoke my mind with all imaginable frankness to him, and could not forbear showing him the difference between those friends he once had and those whom he had abandoned them for."—Corr., i. 38.

he could not but feel the humiliation of being compelled to listen patiently to such a homily and remonstrance from one who had professed to look up to him as a son, and whom he had introduced to office. Notwithstanding St. John's confidence, the day came when he was again, in dismay, to seek the advice and ask for the protection of Marlborough, and to find that the friends of whose power he boasted, were not strong enough to save himself from prosecution and ruin. But no vision of such a possible contingency at this time appeared before the mind of the sanguine and impetuous Secretary of State, who saw nothing but the triumph of the Tories, and the defeat and even punishment of their enemies.

To the Pensionary Buys, St. John still wrote with apparent friendship and confidence. He assured the Dutch statesman that Marlborough had dutifully submitted himself in all things to the Queen and her advisers, and that he would henceforth be governed entirely by their counsels. St. John was quite ravished (Je suis ravi de voir) at finding that the Pensionary was pleased with the moderation Parliament had displayed since the session began. It did, indeed, deserve his approbation. The efforts of a vile faction would be frustrated. The Secretary concluded by assuring his anxious correspondent that no bad peace should ever be made; and that to obtain a good one, two maxims ought to be strictly observed: the first, never to make any advances, and the second, if such advances were made by the enemy, they were not to be disdainfully repulsed, or reasonable propositions summarily rejected.*

* "À l'égard de la paix, je crois comme vous, qu'il ne faut jamais consentir à une qui soit méchante; il me semble que pour obtenir une bonne, il faut observer inviolablement ces deux maximes: en premier lieu, de ne pas faire

These assurances were intended to be very satisfactory to Buys. They would not, however, have been so satisfactory, had the Pensionary of Amsterdam really known that at the very time when the English Secretary of State laid it down as a fundamental proposition that no advances towards peace should be made by England or her allies, secret advances were actually being made to France, and made, with St. John's sanction, by England herself.

There had been for some years residing here an obscure French priest, the Abbé Gaultier. He had come over with the embassy of Marshal Tallard, after the peace of Ryswick, had said mass in the Marshal's chapel, and had become acquainted with the Earl of Jersey, who had been our ambassador in France, had married a Roman Catholic lady, was himself believed to be a Jacobite, and was connected by family ties with St. John. The French ambassador was peremptorily sent out of the country after Louis's recognition of the son of James II. as King of England. Gaultier, by Tallard's orders, remained to watch events, and to communicate as discreetly as possible any information he considered important to the French Secretary of State. He was, in fact, a French spy, with instructions, however, to write no letter, which, by exciting the suspicions of the English government, might either bring his own head into danger, or cause him to be sent away. His residence in London attracted no attention. After Tallard left, his chapel was of course shut up; but the wary Gaultier managed to get himself connected with the Count de Gallas, the minister of the Archduke

les advances; et en second lieu, de ne pas trop se roidir, et rejetter des propositions raisonnables."—Corr., i. 41.

Charles, whom England had acknowledged as King of Spain; and the Abbé continued to say mass in the Count's chapel, as though he had been the most devoted agent of the imperial court. The time at length arrived when this priest, who was very fat, and very unscrupulous, not hesitating to take a false oath to serve his patrons, or to enrich himself by stockjobbing, was to render his country important services, for which he was also to be duly paid in money and abbeys.

One day, about the Christmas of 1710, when the means of bringing about a peace were discussed in the cabinet, the Earl of Jersey told Harley and St. John that he could bring them the very man whom they wanted to send privately to France. The choice was approved, and Jersey was authorized to instruct the priest as to the message he was to take. No written communication was given. Gaultier was told to inform the French government that the English ministry desired peace; but that for their own sakes they were obliged to use much management; that they could not themselves enter into a direct negotiation with the court of France, but if the French king would propose a renewal of the conferences to the Dutch, the British cabinet would take care to give such particular orders to their plenipotentiaries as would effectually prevent Holland from again breaking off the negotiations.*

Early in January, 1711, Gaultier landed on the Continent. He received all facilities for his journey by the French authorities at Nieuport, and wrote to Torcy that he might be expected without delay

* For the personal history of Gaultier, and the most authentic account of the circumstances relating to his first secret mission to France, see the Mémoires du Marquis de Torcy, ii. 16, and the Bol. Corr. *passim*.

at Paris, where he would take up his abode under the name of M. Delorlme, with the fathers of the Oratory, in the Rue Saint Honoré. He arrived almost as soon as his letter; and on the same evening waited upon the minister. His address was abrupt and startling. "Do you want a peace?" said he. "I bring you the means of treating independently of the Dutch, who are unworthy of his Majesty's kindness, and the honour he has done them in addressing himself to them so many times to restore peace to Europe." The minister was quite taken aback. To ask if France wanted peace, was, he candidly confessed, to ask a sick man, sinking under an attack of disease, whether he wished to be cured. But it was necessary to be certain whether Gaultier could perform what he so confidently promised. Public life abounded with impostors; of this priest Torcy knew nothing, but that he had occasionally, and at rare intervals, received letters from him; prudence, therefore, compelled the French minister to hesitate before abandoning himself to the pleasing vision Gaultier displayed before his eyes.*

* Swift, in the party pamphlet which he drew up at Windsor on the peace of Utrecht in 1712, and which was posthumously published as the History of the Last Four Years of the Queen, says that the French Secretary of State had previously written to Gaultier, asking him to sound the new ministers about a peace. This statement was evidently made to excuse his friends, Harley and St. John, in being the first to make the advances to the French government. Torcy's own words show, however, that there was not the slightest foundation in fact for Swift's assertion. I have followed the account the minister has himself given of these first overtures; he had no motive to conceal the truth; and his accuracy cannot be questioned. He says of Gaultier, "Il se rendit le soir à Versailles à l'appartement du ministre, *qui ne le connoissoit que par les lettres qu'il en avoit reçues assez rarement.* . . Comme il a des charlatans de toute espèce, il étoit de la prudence de suspendre une espérance trop flatteuse, et d'apprendre, avant que de la former, quelle étoit la mission de l'abbé Gaultier, et quels moyens il prétendoit employer pour y réussir."—Mémoires, ii. 18. This is utterly inconsistent with any idea of Gaultier himself having been first commissioned by Torcy to speak about opening a negotiation to the English ministers. This discrepancy shows, as do

Gaultier spoke long of the state of England and the position of the ministry. All he asked in return from the French statesman was a few complimentary lines to Jersey, who, as having been the English ambassador at the Court of Versailles, was of course a personal acquaintance of Torcy. This private letter would be a kind of passport; it would be the priest's credentials, and empower him to listen to any propositions the ministers might make. The request was a slight one. It committed France to nothing. But it was not granted without hesitation and delay. Some of the French ministers affected to be indignant at the manner in which their illustrious sovereign had been treated by the Dutch, and advised him to decline to enter into any further negotiations. The prudent Torcy proposed a compromise. The letter to Lord Jersey might of course be given; and Gaultier be told to inform the British ministers, that his most Christian Majesty, indignant at the manner in which the Hollanders had rejected his former offers, would not treat with them, but was ready to enter into a direct negotiation with

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many other passages of the work, with how little confidence Swift's statements can be received. I can scarcely believe that he deliberately wrote a falsehood; but he was only half in the confidence of Harley and St. John, who just told him what they wished the public to accept as the truth. Swift considered this History of the Four Last Years of the Queen as his best political work. To me it seems very inferior in force of argument to the Conduct of the Allies, and in wit to his papers in The Examiner. As a history it is simply ridiculous. What can be said of the boasted impartiality of a writer who keeps a manuscript more than a quarter of a century by him, carefully revises it at intervals, and always intends publishing it; and yet allows, even so late as 1736, passages to stand unaltered in which Sir Robert Walpole is called an "obscure" person, the Duke of Marlborough's personal courage declared to be "doubtful," and his military talents "problematical?" The force of party prejudice, so as totally to unfit the mind for forming any accurate estimate of men or things, could not go further. Or we may perhaps consider it a cynical defiance of public opinion.

England. The effect of such a proposal was of course foreseen and calculated. If the British ministers were, as there was reason to suspect even from the very words in which Gaultier had announced his mission, no friends of the Dutch, it might not be difficult to sow dissensions between England and her allies.

Gaultier hastened back to London and delivered his message. Had St. John and his colleagues firmly resolved not to treat except through Holland, Louis XIV. would, doubtless, have given way, and all the fierce accusations, and disputes about their desertion of the allies might have been avoided. But they fell into the snare laid for them. St. John, notwithstanding his epistolary professions, had no particular liking for Holland or any of the allies, and for Austria he always entertained a positive detestation. "That house of Austria," he said at this time, "has been the evil genius of Britain. I never think of the conduct of that family without recollecting the image of a man braiding a rope of hay whilst his ass bites it off at the other end." With such opinions deliberately avowed by the Secretary of State, it was not difficult to foresee, how would end negotiations for peace of which he had the direction. Gaultier wrote back to Torcy, that the English ministers admitted the reasons which the king had for not treating with Holland to be just; and that they requested him to send to them any propositions which he was disposed to make, that they might communicate them to the allies. It was also intimated, that they hoped, for the honour of England, the proposals which his Majesty might make would not be less advantageous than those he had declared himself ready to agree to at the conferences at Gertruydenberg.

But Louis XIV. was by no means disposed to offer

such terms as he would have gladly accepted at the late conferences. The British ministers had shown him their hands; he knew that they really wanted peace as much as himself. To offer the same conditions as at Gertruydenberg, was to offer conditions which would probably have been satisfactory to all the allies; but Louis by no means wished that all the allies should be satisfied. He wanted the alliance to be dissolved; and the result could only be attained by negotiating with one power at the expense of the rest. The more the allies became jealous and suspicious of each other, the better it was for his purpose. The French king, therefore, refusing to treat with Holland, also refused to pledge himself to offer his former propositions; but proposed a Congress of all the powers to discuss the terms of a peace before the opening of the campaign.

This proposal was considered too general. St. John and his colleagues found it necessary again to send off the Abbé Gaultier to Versailles to induce the French government to offer more specific terms. The secret negotiation had therefore but begun, and already the English ministers seemed to stand in an inferior position to France. Instead of dictating to a baffled and beaten despot, they were more like supplicants to this enemy, who had but a few months ago been ready to agree almost to any terms. The manner in which their first advances towards peace had been received, already confirmed the truth of a prophecy which Marlborough had made to Godolphin at the moment of his fall. "Our extravagant behaviour has so encouraged the French, that they take measures as if the war was just beginning, so that our new ministers will be extremely deceived, for the greater desire they

shall express for peace, the less they will have it in their power to obtain it.*

The pretence which Louis made use of to excuse his refusal to offer terms of peace, similar to those he had been ready to agree to at the Hague and Gertruydenberg, was the brilliant aspect of his grandson's affairs in Spain. In August the Archduke Charles had once more found himself in possession of the Spanish capital. But later in the year, Vendome obliged General Stanhope and ten thousand British troops to surrender prisoners of war; and the next day fought with Staremberg, the bloody and indecisive battle of Villaviciosa. The ostensible object of the war, the conquest of Spain for the Archduke Charles, appeared, when England made the first advances towards peace, further off than ever. But the French king was driven at home to such straits, that had England remained steady to the Grand Alliance, the success of Vendome in the Spanish Peninsula could, in no respect, have induced Louis to prolong the war with the prospect of the march of Marlborough and Eugene on Paris.

The news of the virtual defeat of Staremberg and the surrender of Stanhope, stimulated the passions of the Tories against the Whigs. In the House of Lords, under the direction of Harley and St. John, all the old disputes about the loss of the battle of Almanza, the conduct of the Earl of Galway, and the grievances of Lord Peterborough were revived. It is true, that, to impartial persons, it seemed strange for the ministerial chiefs to go back so far as 1707, to stigmatize their opponents, especially considering that Harley was at that time a Secretary of State, and St. John the Secretary-at-War; and therefore must have shared the

* Marlborough to Godolphin, Aug. 16, 1710.

responsibility with their colleagues in the Government. But this consideration was held to be no restraint. As the Tory Duke of Buckingham, then Lord Steward, said, his party had now the majority and were determined to use it. It was supposed that the war in Spain had been designedly neglected to give more effect to the triumphs of Marlborough in Flanders; and the Queen was brought down to the House to listen to debates and resolutions, which were understood to reflect on the victorious general. Peterborough was thanked; Galway censured; and the Whigs completely overborne.*

But it was in the House of Commons where St. John himself gave, according to his metaphor, the view-halloo, and showed the Tories game, that the adherents of the late administration found least forbearance. In the House of Lords there was still a strong minority of Whig peers whom any day the merest accident might change into a majority; but in the House of Commons the Whigs were almost at the mercy of their adversaries, who in their own justification were resolved to use their power to the utmost. In general, dismissal from office is considered a sufficient punishment for any minister; and their successors are seldom inclined to press hard upon adversaries, whose management of affairs has even been unfortunate and blameable. The Godolphin administration has been considered one of the ablest that ever conducted the affairs of this country, successful at home, triumphant abroad. The real reasons for the dismissal of the late ministers had however been so frivolous and unworthy, that in mere self-defence, the Secretary and his friends felt bound to declare them guilty of

* See Parl. Hist., vi. 981–993.

enormous crimes. Alluding to what he intended to do after the Christmas recess, St. John had asked his friend Drummond, what he should think of a Secretary of State who would himself move for a committee of inquiry into the state of the nation? His conduct was in keeping with this intention. The official knowledge he had acquired as Secretary-at-War, was applied to the discovery of misconduct in the administration of his adversaries: irregularities in the victualling department of the navy, such as during the administration of a great war it was scarcely possible to avoid, and which were afterwards found susceptible of the clearest explanation, were voted great frauds and abuses. An eminent brewer, the member for Portsmouth, was expelled, in order to be prosecuted, though the prosecution was afterwards, out of mere shame, abandoned, since it was found he had advanced money to supply wine to ships in the Mediterranean, where beer, which according to his contract should have been sent, could not have been drunk. Obscure servants were one after another voted guilty of great crimes, of great misdemeanors, of very great misdemeanors. A bill repealing the Naturalisation Act, was passed through the Commons, but thrown out by the Lords. Another bill, which Swift called that noble bill of qualification, and which had St. John's warmest advocacy, was openly directed against the monied interest, and avowedly for the security of that of the country gentlemen. It enacted that all members before taking their seat should declare themselves, on oath, the possessors of a certain income from landed property; and this measure having passed through both Houses, became a law which, though its provisions had been long disregarded, has only been repealed in our time, and with the sanction of another

Tory administration. The work which St. John, in his letter to The Examiner, recommended the editor of that paper to pursue of unveiling, what he called the mysteries of iniquity, and covering their adversaries with confusion, he himself pressed vigorously forward. During the months of January and February, 1711, party resolutions, party addresses, and party legislation, made up the whole business of the House of Commons. The Tory majority seemed but the obedient instrument of the brilliant Secretary's passion and vengeance.*

The inevitable consequence of this course of proceeding was to keep alive the strongest party antagonism. Never before or since, did the two great political sections into which the country has been for six generations divided, regard each other with such determined hostility. The nation was thoroughly divided against itself, and the division extended even into the inmost recesses of private life, where party animosities seldom reach. Addison and Swift had been intimate friends in Ireland, when Addison had been chief secretary during the Earl of Wharton's Lieutenancy, and Swift professed as much regard for Addison as he ever acknowledged for any human being. But they now met coldly at coffee-houses, and spoke to each other as ordinary acquaintances. The women were as decided in their partisanship as the men, the

* Of St. John and his conduct at this time his friend and eulogist Swift says: "He was one of those who shared in the present Treasurer's fortune, resigning up his employment at the same time; and upon that minister being taken again into favour this gentleman was some time after made Secretary of State. Then he began afresh by the opportunities of his station to look into past miscarriages; and by the force of an extraordinary genius and application to public affairs, joined with an invincible eloquence, laid open the scene of miscarriages and corruptions through the whole course of the war in so evident a manner, that the House of Commons seemed principally directed in their resolutions upon this inquiry by his information and advice."—History of the Four Last Years of the Queen, book iii.

Whig ladies patching on different sides of the faces from the Tory ladies, wearing different kinds of muffs and fans, sitting at different sides of the opera, and glancing at each other from opposite rows of boxes at the theatre. Before a young man of fashion could pay his addresses to a young beauty, it became necessary for him to inquire what party she had espoused.*

But these devoted feminine partisans did not give Harley and St. John so much trouble as the country gentlemen. The zeal which St. John had displayed in the House of Commons, and the language which had been held by the publications under the control of the ministry, stimulated the prejudices of the squires to the utmost. They were told that the greatest crimes had been committed; that enormities such as had been never heard of in any other country nor at any other time should be brought to light: and they took the ministers at their word. Nothing would satisfy them but the bringing of the leading Whigs to the block. Why were not the murders, the treasons, and the robberies, all proclaimed to the world? These abuses in the victualling department seemed to the patriotic squires the merest peccadilloes. They wanted impeachments, sentences of death, executions on Tower Hill. Never suspecting that the crimes which would justify such punishments, could not be discovered for that best of all reasons, because they had never been committed, they became discontented with the ministers, suspected them of lukewarmness, and formed themselves into a club, which took its name from the October ale they drank; and, after the House of Commons was up, more than a hundred of these enlightened country members held nightly meetings at the Bell Tavern, in King Street,

* See The Examiner, No. 31.

Westminster. Of the two ministerial chiefs St. John was becoming the favourite. He was eloquent, he was passionate, he was zealous; and as the squires smoked their pipes, and compared notes over their October ale, they thought that the Secretary was restrained by the colder, more temporising, less earnest chief of the Treasury. They railed bitterly at Harley, cunning intriguer that he was, always smirking, bowing, and rolling his head about. Was he not a wolf in sheep's clothing? Had not he and his father declared for the Prince of Orange? Had he not frequented conventicles, and did he not still sometimes speak like a snivelling old Puritan preacher?*

The discontent of the October Club reacted upon the ministry. To outward appearances, Harley and St. John could not be more friendly and united. They dined together, they drank together, they seemed both to unburden themselves to their literary confidants, Swift and Prior, whom they each condescended to flatter, caress, and call by their Christian names. Prior was Matt, Swift Jonathan, and St. John himself, gay, jovial, and careless, was then and long afterwards familiarly called Harry, both by his boon companions in the ministry, and his enemies who sat round the Whig Walpole on the opposition benches. Never before did great ministers unbend themselves more frankly and jocularly among their dependents. St. John, with the destinies of Europe in his keeping, was merry and boisterous, and Harley, always promising, disappointing, and procrastinating, sipping his claret, laughing at a squib from Swift, or reading a copy of verses from Prior, appeared never to have a care.

* See Swift's first account of the October Club in his Journal to Stella, Feb. 18, 1711.

The Secretary and the Treasurer dined together every Saturday afternoon, when the Lord Keeper Harcourt, Lord Rivers, and at last Swift, were permitted to join the party; and they then talked over the business of the week, settled their plans, and entered into the most familiar confidences. But over the heads of this pleasant society a cloud was already gathering. An intriguer is ever apt to suspect intrigue in others. As the grumblings of the October Club were reported to Harley, and as he observed the country members who composed it cheering to the echo St. John's violent declamations against the corruptions of their adversaries, he began to feel jealous of his brilliant colleague. Did the Secretary really mean fair play? Having taken a decided lead in the House of Commons, might not St. John next attempt to take a decided lead in the ministry; and do unto his friend Harley, what Harley had himself done to his former friend Godolphin? Puzzled and hesitating, the Treasurer, as Harley was called, began to watch closely the movements of the sanguine, wayward, and impetuous Secretary.

This jealousy had just begun to be entertained by Harley when a tragical incident occurred which suddenly restored his popularity with the country gentlemen, but also unfortunately increased the distrust which the two colleagues soon showed of each other.*

For the last six years a Frenchman had been known about town under the name of the Marquis de Guiscard. He had originally been an abbé,

* Harley distinctly indicates the February of 1711 as the time when he first began to suspect St. John of endeavouring to form a party for himself out of the discontented Tories.—See the Secret History of the White Staff, a book written after Oxford's disgrace, under his own direction, by De Foe in 1714. See also The Examiner of March 1, No. 30, in which the dissensions in the party are delicately rebuked; and Oxford's Brief Account of Public Affairs.

was of a noble family, and had established relations with a rebellious sect of French Protestants in the Cevennes, called the Camisards. Thinking that he might be of use in Lord Rivers' intended descent on the southern coast of France, the English Government had made him a lieutenant-general, and colonel of a regiment of horse, and gave him an important command. The expedition miscarried. Guiscard lost his regiment though he had still a pension, which was, however, very irregularly paid. He managed to maintain himself principally by gambling. His vices were notorious; and his frequent companion in those vices was the rising statesman, Henry St. John, then Secretary at War. They played together at the same tables; they drank together at the same taverns; they frequented together the same disreputable houses; and they even made love to the same mistress, who was equally condescending and kind to them both. But though they shared the favours of the lady, they were not prepared to share the credit of their natural consequences. She gave birth to a child which Guiscard said was St. John's, and St. John declared to be Guiscard's. This produced a quarrel; the intimacy ceased; St. John, retiring from office, went into the country, and saw his dissipated associate no more. Profuse, careless, licentious, a stranger to all self-restraint, Guiscard's wants pressed him hard. He sold his plate; he was dependent on his housekeeper for a dinner; he lived by contributions from his friends. His distress had become almost intolerable when he learnt that his old boon companion Harry had been appointed a Secretary of State. After being first patronised by the late ministers, Guiscard had been neglected by them; he had, therefore, a claim on the new

government; and he entreated St. John not to throw him over. The Secretary seems to have done his best for his former associate. A pension was granted to him of five hundred a year, which, however, Harley, to whom Guiscard's vices were especially hateful, morosely reduced to four hundred, and declined putting on the permanent establishment. Such a precarious allowance Guiscard thought no provision at all. Harassed, wretched, of a dark and melancholy complexion, fierce and impulsive, with the blood of the south in his veins, he began to form wild and dangerous schemes. He resolved to make his peace with France by entering into a treasonable correspondence. His first communications, reviling the English ministers, were sent to the Countess of Dorchester, who transmitted them to her husband, the Earl of Portmore, then ambassador at the Court of Lisbon. The letter was addressed to a French banker, M. Moreau; but the earl, suspecting something wrong, had them opened, made himself acquainted with their treasonable contents, and returned them to Harley. Guiscard was watched; his steps were dogged wherever he went; and more letters were discovered which he had sought to send to France through similar sources. On the afternoon of the 8th of March, the anniversary of the queen's accession to the throne, as he was walking moodily in the Mall between two and three o'clock, he was arrested by a messenger from the Secretary of State's Office; and attached to the warrant was the bold, scrawling signature of one whom he knew well, H. St. John.

Guiscard, in a fury, besought the messenger to kill him on the spot. He was taken at once to the Cockpit, where St. John's office was then situated, and the site of which is now occupied by the Treasury.

In the clerk's room, where he was kept waiting for some time, Guiscard asked for a glass of water and some bread and butter, which were brought to him from a neighbouring coffee-house. A knife for which he asked at the same time was forgotten. But his head was full of plans of vengeance against his old friend the Secretary of State. On the desk a penknife was lying which Guiscard, while he was kept waiting until the members of the Cabinet were brought together, managed to conceal in his shirt sleeves. His pockets were searched; but nothing dangerous was found upon him; and he was at length led into the inner room. There was the Secretary of State, ready to examine him, and surrounded by all the ministers. Just before Guiscard was brought in St. John had taken Harley's seat, in order that he might be in a better light for watching the countenance of the prisoner; a desk was then between him and Guiscard, and to this change of places at the last moment the Secretary probably owed the preservation of his life. "Have you written any letters to France lately?" asked St. John. Guiscard replied stoutly, "No!" His colour came and went: but he moved jauntily from one foot to the other, and fumbled with his hands in his pockets, affecting an air of genteel indifference. "Do you know M. Moreau, the banker at Paris?" continued the Secretary. "Well," said Guiscard, "what of that?" His own letters were produced, and he saw at once that all was discovered. The Secretary frequently exhorted him to tell the truth. "You have betrayed," said St. John, "the Queen, your benefactress, and Britain, the country which has been your support and refuge, where you have been appointed to a military command, and treated with such noble confidence that it makes it

a double villany in you to be a villain!" "May I speak a word with you in private?" said Guiscard. "No," replied St. John; "that is quite impracticable. You are before the whole committee as a criminal, and what you have to say must be said to all." "Only let me see you alone for a few moments," still urged Guiscard. "Not at all!" was the answer, and the prisoner's entreaties were cut short by some of the lords rising to ring the bell for the messengers to conduct him out of the room. "That is hard," he exclaimed, "not one word!" and bending over Harley who sat near him, he shouted, "Then have at thee," and stabbed the Treasurer furiously twice in the breast with the penknife. "The villain has killed Mr. Harley," said St. John, and drawing his sword, he thrust it into Guiscard's body. Ormond and Newcastle followed St. John's example; but some of the other ministers were frightened, and jumped upon tables, anxious to get out of the way. St. John, full of passion, seemed anxious to kill Guiscard on the spot, and repeated his thrust. "Do not kill him," said Lord Poulet. Struggling hard, Guiscard was at last pulled down by the throat, and secured by the messengers, one of whom was a man of enormous strength, and yet had seemed unequal to grapple with the desperate assassin.

Harley, who had displayed much serene courage at this trying time, was carried home. The news soon spread throughout the town. Swift was playing cards at the house of a lady of rank when he was told of Harley's danger, and he at once rushed to St. John's residence, which was but a few doors off, to learn more of the matter. Neither the Secretary nor his wife was at home; but Swift met Mrs. St. John coming down

the street in her chair in the greatest anxiety, not for Harley but for her own husband, who, she had been informed, had killed Guiscard, as indeed he had been very nearly doing. St. John might be a very indifferent husband; his wife and he might have frequent quarrels, and sometimes occupy separate rooms; but though some former biographers seem to have been quite unaware of the fact, Mr. and Mrs. St. John still lived in the same house together; and whenever he was in any danger through the contrivances of others, or from his own imprudence, the good lady always displayed the tenderest alarm.*

Harley's wounds were found not to be very dangerous. But he was confined to his room for six weeks, quantities of clotted blood every now and then coming from his breast.

The Tories of course were loud in their indignation at Guiscard, who died wretchedly of a neglected wound in Newgate. He was frequently examined by the members of the Council, and just before he died, asked St. John to give him his hand, and pardon him for what he had attempted to do. "I pardon you," replied the Secretary; "may God pardon you!" St. John, from this circumstance, as well indeed from his former intimacy with Guiscard, and the whole history of the attempted

* "Lady Stanley came to visit Mr. St. John, and sent up for me to make up a quarrel with Mrs. St. John, whom I never yet saw; and, what do you think? that devil of a secretary would not let me go, but kept me by main force, though I told him I was in love with his lady, and it was a shame to keep back a lover, etc. But all would not do; so at last I was forced to break away, but never went up; it was then too late."—Swift's Journal to Stella, Jan. 8, 1711. For other notices of Mrs. St. John in the same work see the Journals of March 8, April 7 and 10, and August 4 and 5 in the same year. See also Swift's Letter to Archbishop King on the night when Harley was stabbed.

assassination, declared that it was he whom Guiscard wished to kill, and that it was the merest accident which caused Harley to be stabbed instead of himself. Yet the Treasurer was spoken of as a martyr, as the patriotic victim of France and popery, while nobody gave any of the credit to the Secretary, for whom the penknife had really been intended. St. John was loud in his complaints, declaring, in all companies, that if any of the ministers were to be considered obnoxious to France and the Papists, he whom Guiscard had especially marked out, as the object of his vengeance, ought to be the man. There can be no doubt, that in one respect the Secretary was perfectly right: he was really the person whom Guiscard had desired to slay.

But Harley had actually been stabbed. It was small comfort, after receiving two serious wounds on the breast-bone, just about half a nail's breadth from the heart, to be told that they were intended for another person. Having undergone the danger, ought he not to have the glory? Harley himself, after the first fortnight, still pale and thin, and just able to walk about his bedroom with a stick, very naturally thought so; and as even the members of the October Club relented towards him, could not but believe, that, having felt the blows from the penknife, he was actually the person whose life Guiscard sought to take away. As officious talebearers reported to him the claim which the Secretary had set up to be regarded as Guiscard's intended victim, the suspicion and distrust which he already felt of his brilliant colleague, were not likely to be removed. The jealousy between the two ministers increased. To such a height had it reached by the end

of March, that Swift, who thought of writing a history of the attempted assassination, prudently abandoned the task for fear of offending either one or both of his patrons. The work was undertaken, at his suggestion, by Mrs. Manley. This lady was notorious as the literary retailer of libel and scandal in which she had not spared herself, the author of the New Atlantis, the slanderer of Somers. She was then living with Barber, the printer of The Examiner, and neither her moral character nor her literary ability reflected much honour on the party for which she employed her scurrilous pen. The first page of the pamphlet she produced was written by Swift; and the contrast is great between these two paragraphs of his plain and manly style and the rest of the inflated and affected composition. On the delicate point, however, relating to the rival pretensions of St. John and Harley to the honour of martyrdom from Guiscard's knife, the virago acquitted herself with some dexterity. She stated that after Guiscard had repeated his blow on Harley's breast, he rushed on St. John, thus "seeking the destruction of those two dreadful enemies of France." Her getting over the significant fact that Guiscard had asked to speak to St. John alone is especially ingenious. "It appeared reasonable," she wrote, "that if, upon the pretence of discovery, Guiscard could get Mr. St. John to withdraw, Mr. Harley might *possibly* be of the party, and he have a chance to murder both before they could be assisted." And of the courage which Harley displayed after he had received his wounds, she declared, "from his own behaviour all his friends, *particularly his tenderest, Mr. St. John*, hoped he was but slightly hurt." In this manner did Mrs. Manley diplomatically endeavour to distribute her praise between the two great ministers, and attempt to do

honour to them both, in the hope that they would both be satisfied.*

But it was impossible to satisfy them both. The two statesmen could never from that time act cordially together. Harley was cold, dry, cautious, distrustful, correct in his morals, reserved in his conversation, destitute not only of frankness, but even of the appearance of frankness, without eloquence, without imagination, hesitating at every word, guarded of himself even in the House of Commons, where he seldom spoke, and always with reluctance, without power to gain friends or to keep them, ready to promise but slow to perform, glad to put off until to-morrow everything that he was not absolutely driven to do to-day, and loving, above all things, to look serious and do nothing. St. John was bold, gay, impassioned, full of fire, and full of energy, with brilliant eloquence and most pleasing elocution, accustomed to act on the impulse of the moment, eager to enjoy the present hour, careless of the future, familiar with all his associates, averse either to restrain his inclinations or to conceal his thoughts, and, though ready enough to seize upon any advantage that came in his way, one of the worst dissemblers in the world. It is much more surprising how two such men should ever have become friends than that, when they began to quarrel, their different characters should begin to tell, and render any reconciliation impossible.

While Harley was absent, the entire management of the House of Commons of course fell to his brilliant colleague. He brought down two messages from the

* A True Narrative of what passed at the Examination of the Marquis de Guiscard at the Cockpit, March 8, 1810–11; his stabbing Mr. Harley; and other precedent and subsequent facts relating to the Life of the said Guiscard. Printed by John Morphew, 1711.

sovereign, one recommending the building of fifty new churches, which gave much satisfaction to the Tories, and the other announcing the death of the emperor, which seriously affected all the plans of the allies for the Spanish succession. It has been said that, even at this time, St. John thought himself fully qualified to be prime minister, and would perhaps gladly have learnt that Harley's wounds had proved mortal, that he might, at one bound, have leaped into the first place in the Government.* At all events, from this time he is supposed to have entertained the design of supplanting the Treasurer. But he felt that the greatest weakness of his position was the little influence he had at Court. Harley had kept this important means of ascendancy entirely to himself. Though St. John had, of course, as Secretary of State, frequent access to her Majesty, his communications were as yet almost entirely official; and as the Queen had been told of the excesses of his private life, the opinion she entertained of him was not favourable. As St. John confessed, Harley held the thread of his intrigue, through Mrs. Masham, in his own hands; and "he was the first spring of all motion, by his credit with the sovereign." †

When the spirit of discord is once established, the means both to give and to take offence are seldom wanting. Godolphin's administration of the Treasury had been so much applauded, that Harley's friends, in his own justification, felt themselves compelled to find serious abuses in the department. It appeared from the report of the committee brought up by Harley's brother, who was one of the auditors of the Exchequer, that accounts to the amount of thirty-five millions of

* See Swift's Enquiry.

† Letter to Sir W. Windham.

money had not yet been passed. Thirty-five millions! exclaimed with wonder all the country gentlemen, who seemed to consider that Godolphin must have pocketed that enormous sum, though, in fact, after administering the affairs of the Treasury for so many years, he retired from office with an estate of less than four thousand a year, seriously embarrassed, and even refused a pension which was offered him by the Queen. It was necessary, however, to get up a cry against the late Lord Treasurer; and much was made of these thirty-five millions. Fourteen or fifteen millions of the money related to the accounts of Bridges, the Paymaster of the Forces, who had continued in office under the new ministry, and had long been an intimate friend of St. John. It was impossible to blame Godolphin, without blaming Bridges; and he was strongly attacked by the supporters of the Government. St. John, however ready he had been himself to declaim against abuses, was not prepared to give up his old friend the Paymaster; besides, from having been Secretary-at-War, he had some knowledge of the dilatory manner in which affairs were managed at the Pay Office. Some of the accounts which had not yet been passed dated from the reign of King William, and even from the reign of Charles II.; and, of course, during a long war, such as the country was then waging, without any grounds for positive blame on particular persons, the difficulties of impressing the Paymaster's accounts had very much increased. These delays, indeed, continued in that office during nearly the whole of the eighteenth century, long after the generation then in active life were in their graves: such different Paymasters as the first Lord Holland, and the first William Pitt, were obliged to allow the same

dilatory management; and these abuses, if abuses they were to be regarded, continued until they were only corrected through the reforms introduced into the office by Paymaster Edmund Burke in 1782. St. John, in the present state of his relations with Harley, was perhaps not disinclined to thwart him in these attacks; he told Harley's brother that he knew nothing of the business, warmly defended his friend Bridges, and declared that neither he nor the late ministry were to be blamed for this delay in passing the accounts. Having once taken a side, the Secretary was not inclined to draw back. Notwithstanding the clamour which was raised against him, he became more vehement and eloquent; and careless of the offence he gave to many members of his own party, fairly left them in the lurch.

St. John's conduct was of course reported to Harley, who had been for a few days in the country recovering his strength before again taking his seat in the House. He was highly indignant, as, of course, were all his friends. The spirit with which they had directed these inquiries may be inferred from the words of Swift, who, dining with Harley when St. John's conduct was alluded to, said to the Treasurer—"If the late ministry were not to blame in that article, you ought to lose your head for putting the Queen upon changing them." Harley laughed; but it was clear to the busy divine that all was not well between the two statesmen. It was said that the Secretary would soon be out of office. No person at that time had any idea that he would prove too strong for the Treasurer.*

* "By some hints given me from another hand that I deal with, I am afraid the Secretary will not stand long. This is the fate of courts. I will, if I meet Mr. St. John alone on Sunday, tell him my opinion, and beg him to set himself right, else the consequences may be very bad; for I see not how they can

On Harley's reappearance in the House of Commons harmony was not at all restored. He received the most fulsome compliments from the Speaker; it was said that he was to be appointed Lord Treasurer, and to be sent into the House of Lords. The death of the queen's uncle, Lord Rochester, who had succeeded Somers as President of the Council, and was supposed, in some measure, to balance Harley's influence on the royal mind, left him without a rival in court favour, and probably increased the alienation of St. John. Resenting what he considered the bad conduct of the Secretary, Harley became more reserved than before, was seldom seen in the House of Commons, neither consulted St. John nor any of his colleagues, procrastinated more than ever, and brought all business to a stand.

Such was the state of the ministry in the last week of May, when the Secretary wrote in this manner to his friend the Earl of Orrery, who had succeeded Cadogan as Commissioner of the Spanish Netherlands:—"Do you not remember, my Lord, a certain time last summer, when for several weeks I avoided writing to you, although I knew how uneasy the pangs of expectation were to the Duke of Argyle and yourself, in that crisis of domestic affairs? We are now in a state not

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well want him neither, and he would make a troublesome enemy."—Swift's Journal, April 27, 1711. Cunningham, in his History of Great Britain, gives us a long speech of St. John, violently attacking the late ministry about these thirty-five millions. That speech represents correctly enough the spirit of the declamations delivered by the Secretary at an earlier period of the session on the alleged abuses in the victualling department of the army and navy; but with regard to the thirty-five millions it is very apocryphal. It was evidently put into St. John's mouth in the manner in which Livy and Plutarch put speeches into the mouths of their heroes, as a modern author who wrote in Latin might of course think himself justified in doing.—See Cunningham's History of Great Britain.

very unlike to that which we were then in. Mr. Harley, since his recovery, has not appeared at the Council, or at the Treasury, at all, and very seldom in the House of Commons. We, who are reputed to be in his intimacy, have few opportunities of seeing him, and none of talking freely with him. As he is the only true channel through which the queen's pleasure is conveyed, so there is, and must be, a perfect stagnation till he is pleased to open himself and set the water flowing. You remember, my Lord, that a scene of action followed last year very quickly after that full stop which seemed to have been put to the measures then carrying on. I hope the same will again happen; and as soon as I discern the least appearance of it you shall hear from me on the subject. I fancy the delay will not be long, and that the alteration will begin with the promotion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the Earldom of Oxford, and to the rank of Treasurer."*

Two or three days afterwards the patent creating Harley Earl of Oxford passed through St. John's office. But the glowing preamble to the deed was certainly not St. John's composition. It occasioned, at the time, much ridicule among the new earl's political enemies, and was even thought by his friends extravagantly eulogistic. The pride which Harley was accustomed to display in boasting over his cups of the antiquity of his family, and of his descent from the Veres and Mortimers, and which St. John had frequently observed with much disdainful impatience and credulity, breaks out in the first sentence of the pompous Latin exordium.† The whole of the inscription was in singular contrast to the brief simplicity and

* Letter of May 18, 1711.

† It begins "Vir illustri et perantiquâ gente ortus," &c.

dignity of the prefaces in which these honours are generally conveyed. Harley took care to have it printed and published, with an English translation, probably from the pen of Swift; and it caused bitter rage, envy, and contempt in the mind of the scornful and resentful St. John.

And so, just as the early summer began, while the fresh-mown hay was pleasantly fragrant in the fields about Chelsea, the boats swam gaily on the river, and the nightingales at Vauxhall were ceasing to sing, Robert Harley was made Earl of Oxford, Earl of Mortimer, and Baron Harley of Wigmore Castle. A few days afterwards he was presented by the queen with the white wand as Lord Treasurer; and it was whispered through the City that he would shortly have the Garter. He was surrounded with petitioners; crowds attended his levee; he seemed at the highest summit of human glory. A friendly attempt was made at this time to revive the little Saturday club, with the select dinner party of the Lord Keeper, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and Lord Rivers. Swift, who had also been admitted to this select company, endeavoured to amuse them at the time of Harley's elevation by writing to St. John a humorous letter, which the Secretary read aloud among the guests, informing them that it was the last time he would have the pleasure of dining with Robert Harley, Esq., and Sir Simon Harcourt, Knight, whose patent of peerage, as Lord Harcourt, was also being prepared.* But it was impossible to restore the old cordiality either by Dr. Swift's jokes or by his earnest remonstrances. Other guests were soon invited to the party; as it became more numerous and general, of course frankness and confidence diminished; and it degenerated into

* Letter to St. John, of May 12, 1711.

a mere formal afternoon assembly of the ministerial chiefs.*

St. John, however, hiding what he felt even from his nearest friends, at first put the best face he could on the altered relations between himself and the new earl. He appears to have wished to persuade himself, or at least others, that he was satisfied with all the honours which the favour of the sovereign had showered on Harley's head. On the 12th of June, the day of the prorogation of the Parliament, the Secretary again wrote to the Earl of Orrery: "Our friend, Mr. Harley, is now Earl of Oxford and High Treasurer. This great advancement is, what the labour he has gone through, the danger he has run, and the services he has performed seem to deserve. But he stands on slippery ground, and envy is always near the great to fling up their heels on the least trip which they make."† The Earl of Oxford, as Harley was now entitled to be called, did certainly stand on very slippery ground: envy was very near him indeed; and there was a brilliant Secretary of State, ready enough if the opportunity should offer, to fling up the new Earl's heels.

* See Swift's Journal, *passim*.

† Corr., i. 148.

CHAPTER VII.

1711.

THE SECRETARY'S OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE LIFE.

THE prorogation of the Parliament was a great relief to St. John. It had sat much longer than usual; and while Harley was, after the attempt of Guiscard, pushing his fortune at Court and acquiring an earldom and the Treasurer's staff, the Secretary in the House of Commons had borne the burden and heat of the day. As he himself complained, he was almost dead with fatigue and anxiety. He had a habit of speaking of the load of business on his shoulders as more than one man could bear. He would shake his head, shrug his shoulders, and hint that all this could not go on much longer; that if other people did not feel for him he must feel for himself; and that he might soon be expected to break down altogether. His friends, including Swift, who has recorded the circumstance, sympathized with him in his presence, but among themselves laughed at his complaints, and ascribed them to the ridiculous affectation of a young man pretending to be overwhelmed with public business, while, in truth, he delighted in his labours.*

* Swift's Journal, Nov. 3, 1711.

But though some degree of affectation in this matter was neither ungraceful nor unnatural, assuredly at this time St. John, as Secretary of State, had enough on his hands. The principal portion of the weight of debate in the House of Commons, of correspondence with foreign courts, and of the responsibility of the great negotiations on which the peace of Europe depended, all fell to his share. Without him very little could be done: his activity alone could rouse the torpid indolence of the Prime Minister, who, from the time that he had obtained the Treasurer's staff, seemed quite at a loss what to do with it; and who, in the greatest position which a British subject could reach, was, to those who watched him closely every day, appearing one of the most helpless and frivolous of human beings. There are men whose ardour is entirely spent in the race of ambition; no sooner is the goal attained than their energy expires. Harley had been a skilful manager of the House of Commons; he had, with rare dexterity, balanced himself long between contending parties; he had shown himself a master of court intrigue: but the hand which grasped the white staff seemed paralyzed, and his incapacity was soon proved. The Secretary, with all his faults, was at least equal to his situation. Those who disliked him most acknowledged that he was not a fool.

As Harley was recovering, and the dissensions between him and St. John began to run high, the Abbé Gaultier returned from France with a note from Torcy, containing the first definite propositions for peace. They were still very general: the desire to play off England against Holland was plainly indicated in the memorial; but a copy of it was soon transmitted by the Secretary to the Hague. He found reason to

suspect that the Dutch were endeavouring to open negotiations on their own account. The English ministers after having at the outset expressed a desire to treat through Holland, had already completely altered their intention; and the Secretary particularly requested France to leave the business in their own hands. Louis and his faithful Torcy, of course, again readily pledged themselves to treat only through the British Government; but they secretly rejoiced that England now seemed to supplicate, and was prepared to bid against Holland for their favour. At the request of St. John, another memorial was sent from Marli, through Gaultier, as M. De Lorlme, to England containing some more explicit details of the advantages to be conferred on this country. But the negotiation, while Harley was busy about his earldom and Treasurer's staff, and full of suspicions of the Secretary, had made but little progress. As soon as the Prime Minister attained his personal objects, and a little more cordiality was apparently restored between him and St. John, they determined upon a new expedient. Prior, who was already favourably known to the Court of Versailles, by having been the Secretary to the embassies of the Duke of Portland and the Earl of Jersey, was sent on a secret journey to France. The summer, however, was far advanced before the mission was known to have any positive result.*

At the same time St. John was not without the ambition to distinguish himself as a war minister. He aspired to nothing less than to expel the French from North America, and personally fitted out an expedition to the river St. Lawrence. Such a conquest, he thought, would afford England greater advantages than

* See Torcy's Mémoires, ii. 25; Corr., i. 106, 109, &c.

the barren glories of Marlborough; it would at least show that other Governments besides the Godolphin administration knew how to conduct a war. In everything relating to this expedition the Secretary took the greatest interest. He considered it his own, counted impatiently the days when it was getting ready for sea, dreamed of nothing but triumphs, and while the men-of-war and transports were under weigh, already saw in imagination the British standard flying on the walls of Quebec. Wishing to make his court to the favourite, the Secretary had put the land forces of the expedition under the command of Mrs. Masham's brother, Brigadier Hill, who had already been promoted over the heads of many older officers, and was now, through St. John's patronage, to have the opportunity of rivalling Marlborough. Could not jovial Jack, who could drink his four bottles without inconvenience, also win victories? Might not Mrs. Masham show the queen what a member of her family could also do to uphold the glory of the English arms? Great men only wanted their opportunities; Marlborough had had all his own way. Everything was expected from this expedition. As it was leaving the English shores, St. John wrote a farewell letter to the gallant Brigadier Hill, full of encouraging anticipations. "God give you success," St. John observed; "if good wishes can contribute to it, they are in no degree wanting. I am sure there is no need of saying anything to animate you to pursue with vigour an undertaking wherein the honour of our mistress, and the most durable advantages to our country is concerned; I shall therefore only renew my vows for your prosperity." After the ships had been about five weeks at sea, a Scotch vessel arrived at Greenock with the news

that the great fleet had been seen standing with a fair wind for the North American coast. St. John was all exultation. He wrote to the Queen that it was evident the voyage had been prosperous, and that Brigadier Hill, and the naval officers assisting him, were doubtless at that very time carrying into execution her Majesty's commands.*

More than two months passed away before any definite intelligence of the success of the gallant Brigadier and the expedition was received. While the ships were approaching the river St. Lawrence, and Prior was quietly going down to the house of Sir Thomas Hanmer, to cross over unobserved from the Sussex coast, to confer with Torcy about the conditions of peace, it may be desirable to look a little more closely into the official and private life of the ambitious Secretary. Thus only can we form for ourselves any just idea of St. John. He was not always immersed in the routine of his office; his head was not always full of diplomatic notes and parliamentary speeches; it was his boast to combine pleasure with business, to be Alcibiades, or, rather, Petronius.

In his office he could indeed work hard enough, though sometimes by fits and starts, never quietly, regularly, steadily. The mails frequently went out very late at night, or very early in the morning; and at these times, which St. John called his post nights, he sat up writing and despatching letter after letter until long after the dawn of the next day. But during these unseasonable hours, even when he was almost overcome by sleep, and his fingers were so tired that they could hardly hold the pen, he never relaxed into carelessness, nor allowed important documents to lie about in the

* Letter to the Queen, July 5, 1711.

disgraceful manner Harley had formerly transacted the business of his office. St. John was always wide awake. He frequently sat at his desk from ten o'clock in the morning until eight at night, taking no refreshment, and then hurrying home almost famished, or calling on his way at Prior's house, in Duke Street, Westminster, and supping gaily at midnight, sometimes on a cold blade bone of mutton. The clerks complained that he expected them neither to eat, drink, nor sleep; but if he was occasionally unreasonable to them, he was also unreasonable to himself. During these earlier negotiations for peace, he worked very much harder than they did. As it was necessary that the first overtures should be kept strictly secret, he took care to copy many of the papers with his own hand; and even when he was obliged to have some assistance, only took a single clerk into his confidence.

To lighten the labours of his department, a third Secretary of State had been recently appointed. But the Duke of Queensbury, who had been selected for the office, was found to have but little aptitude for the administration of public affairs. The third Secretary was extremely slow; and St. John found that he had just as much work as ever to do. In this summer the Duke of Queensbury unexpectedly died: as his office had been proved to be useless, no successor was chosen to fill it; and all the business was, as before, carried on by the two Secretaries, Lord Dartmouth and St. John. St. John was, however, as he had been from the first, the Secretary of State. The honest, grave, and painstaking Lord Dartmouth could scarcely be considered to have an opinion of his own on the general policy of the administration; it was St. John who conducted the

secret negotiations, and held in his hands the great issues of peace or war.

He was called the handsome Secretary. With his fine person and engaging presence, he seemed to carry about with him an irresistible fascination. The beauty of his face was universally acknowledged. Though he had all the cares of State on his mind, he could not look grave and business-like. There was about him still the charm of youth combined with the authority which the administration of great affairs naturally confers.* The two studious years in his country retirement had given him a knowledge of books which he had not previously possessed; and he seemed not only to be a man of business, but also a man of learning. The information he wanted was always ready at his call; his pleasant wit and keen intelligence enabled him to make the best display of all he had. His statesmanlike capacity could scarcely be denied by his bitterest enemies; he grasped at once the real point at issue in the intricate diplomatic questions with which he had to deal; and having once seized it he never let it slip out of his fingers. His knowledge of French, though generally accurate, and far superior to that of most of his contemporary statesmen, was not thought sufficient by him to conduct these negotiations. As so much was believed to depend on the Spanish succession, he felt it necessary to acquire a knowledge of the Spanish language; and he soon mastered it sufficiently to read for himself whatever he wished to know. When important documents, however, about the peace were to be sent abroad, and it was desirable

* "A certain lady, renowned for beauty (the Lady Mary Churchill, Duchess of Montague), at the princess's palace, desired she might have the dressing up of the young, handsome statesman."—True Relation of the Intended Riot, &c., 1711.

that every word should have the exact meaning, and no more than he intended; he preferred, in his communications with the Dutch statesmen, writing his diplomatic notes in plain English. His letters to Torcy were, on the other hand, always in French; and this distinction perhaps shows, as much as more important peculiarities, that he was ready to grant to France in these negotiations a latitude which he was not willing to allow to Holland.*

His manners were courteous, without being studied. The artificial politeness of some great diplomatists was, indeed, quite contrary to his disposition. He was no great master of the art of dissembling; he could conceal neither his likes nor dislikes; his passion was very easily roused, and when once he was in a passion, he was very likely to blurt out more than was prudent. On these occasions he would sometimes say what he would immediately regret, and soon afterwards forget, but which his enemies never forgave. His conversation was pleasing; in private society he was gay, natural, and frank; he spent his money freely, and seemed to despise it: even Marlborough, who knew men well, had formerly, as we have seen, answered for St. John's fidelity and sincerity to Godolphin; and certainly at this time, deceit and faithlessness would not have been considered the especial vices of the Secretary of State. A good-natured man, perhaps, he could not justly be called; but he had at least the appearance of goodhumour; and even his vices seemed akin to generosity rather than to self-seeking ambition.

Of these vices the most prominent was hard drinking. The faculty which he had, almost as a boy,

* See the Letter to M. Buys in the Bolingbroke Correspondence, and compare it with the tone of the whole correspondence with Torcy.

made his pride and boast of swallowing more wine than other men, he still possessed as Secretary of State, in no sensible diminution. Fits of drinking alternated with fits of business: he would sit up all one night writing despatches, and on the next with some gay companions over the bottle. The Secretary's champagne and burgundy were famous; and these wines he drank in unlimited quantities. He could sit nearly everybody out. Even placehunters, who came to pay court to him, found their heads were not strong enough to drink equally with their jovial patron, and left him at three o'clock in the morning, shouting for T'other flask. Twice during these summer months when so much depended upon him had he been ill through drinking to excess. At first he had a fever, and afterwards, just as the negotiations for peace were making some progress, he was laid up with pains in the back and a severe attack of gravel. For some days he was obliged to forswear all intoxicating beverages; and, what was a severe punishment for one with such strong convivial propensities, had to sip tea while his friends about him were swallowing his champagne. No sooner did he find himself a little better, than all his promises of reformation were thrown to the winds; and the Secretary in his cups again cursed and raved, and twaddled and railed against Harley, and let out important secrets of State, and was as gay and boisterous as any schoolboy. His wife, who really seems to have had the deepest love and the most tender affection for him, was in despair. The hurry, excitement, and anxiety of the last few months were too much for the poor lady, whose constitution was very delicate; and just as St. John was breaking out again after his recovery, she became herself seriously ill, and was advised to drink the

waters at Bath. She wept; but the doctor's orders were imperative; and she was compelled to leave London. Again with tears in her eyes, as Swift was bidding her good-bye, she besought him to look after the Secretary, saying earnestly that he was the only person with whom she could trust her husband.*

"We were determined to have you. You were the only one we were afraid of," said St. John to Swift one night as he gaily quaffed off a goblet of champagne. Swift was doing the work of the ministry, as no other man at that time was either as able or unscrupulous enough to have done it; he was assailing all his old friends with merciless satire and invective, and proving that there was no malice like the rancour of the renegade. His reward was to be looked upon as the confidential go-between of the Treasurer and the Secretary, and to be their favourite companion. Harley would obediently go into the House of Commons with a message from Swift to St. John, telling him that the doctor would not dine with him if he dined late; and when the throng of suitors were assembled at Harley's house, and their coaches filled the neighbouring streets, Swift would walk composedly into the minister's bedroom and show himself to the envying crowd as a person of trust and importance. The two statesmen knew the value of the arrogant and eccentric divine's services: this was the price he put upon them; and this price, with much open amusement and a little secret contempt, they condescended to pay. Early in the morning and late at night, in his times of business and his times of pleasure, to St. John Swift was admitted at all hours. But their intimacy was not without a cloud. One day at dinner the Secretary was cold and reserved: the doctor re-

* See Swift's Journal of Jan. 18, April 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12, 1711.

flected on this change of temper; and at their next interview asked him bluntly what was the reason of the alteration. Alluding to what he had suffered from the caprices of Sir William Temple, Swift plainly said he would endure no such treatment again from any great man who honoured him with his company. St. John assured him that there was no cause of offence, and that he had only been depressed and ill from keeping late hours, with too much work and too much drinking. Lord Peterborough, who had gone on a mission to Vienna, sent the Secretary a present of twelve dozen flasks of the finest burgundy, on condition that Swift, who was winning Peterborough's heart by his attacks on Marlborough in the Examiner, should have his share; but St. John liked the wine too well to part with a single flask, and said nothing about it to Swift until it was all drunk. The doctor did not at all like the cheat the Secretary had put upon him. "I reckon he owes me thirty-six pounds," computed the economical vicar of Laracor. To make him amends, St. John sent him a case of the Florence wine which the Duke of Tuscany was then accustomed to present to the English Secretaries of State. But Swift was obliged to pay seven and sixpence to two of St. John's servants who brought the case to his lodgings, and the wine afterwards turned sour. "And," said he, "I dare not complain."

After going to Court on the Sunday morning, it was Swift's custom at this time to dine every Sunday afternoon with the Secretary. Sometimes the company was very numerous, at others it was very select. Swift preferred dining with a few great lords at St. John's table, and frequently undertook himself to invite those whom he wished to meet at dinner. On one occasion St. John

showed him the bill of fare. "Pooh, pooh," said he; "show me your bill of company." St. John repeated this to Harley as a very good saying, though the wit of it is not perhaps so very remarkable. On another occasion, in Prior's presence, the Secretary declared that Swift's lines on Vanbrugh were better than any that Prior had written, though the doctor himself confessed that he did not see their supreme excellence. In fact, it suited St. John's purpose to flatter Swift; and there was a wicked irony in the notes the Secretary sometimes wrote, inviting him to the Sunday banquets as Reverend Sir.* What the style of conversation was on these occasions may be learnt from an account which Swift gave to Stella of one of these convivial meetings on a Sunday in May, when the company was more numerous than usual. Swift would not allow them to swear, and indulge in obscene talk; and seeing that his presence was a restraint upon these worthy champions of the Church and Tory party, as soon as the dinner was over the model divine abruptly took his leave.†

Excessive drinking, profane swearing, and loose conversation were not even the worst. It must be confessed that the Secretary outraged the decencies of his situation still more grossly. Though his wife was devotedly attached to him, and though they still lived under the same roof, he was as licentious as in the days of his early youth, when it had been his boast to rival the wild exploits of Rochester. The House of Commons, the War Office, the studies in

* See a specimen of one of these notes in Scott's edition of Swift, xv. 381.

† "Mr. Secretary had too much company with him to-day, so I came away soon after dinner. I give no man liberty to swear or talk b—dy, and I found some of them were in constraint, so I left them to themselves."—Journal to Stella, Sunday, May 20, 1711.

his country retirement, the development of his genius, the Secretary of State's office, the rivalry with Harley, all the promptings of a high and justifiable ambition had not rendered his life purer than that of the lowest rake about London. On the news of St. John's appointment as Secretary of State spreading through the town, an ancient lady who presided over a mansion of easy virtue, exclaimed with delight, "Five thousand a year, my girls, and all for us!" It is not from his political enemies, from Steele, Addison, or Walpole that we have the most explicit details of St. John's habitual debaucheries. The Secretary's friends have been the most candid. A handsome woman, they all admit, sometimes jestingly and sometimes sadly, was a temptation he never could resist. Rank made no difference whatever in his appreciation. With the same ardour he would make love to a maid of honour about the person of the Queen, or follow in broad daylight a common woman of the town, whose appearance might happen to please him, as he was walking with some friends in the Mall.*

After this it was an edifying sight to behold the Secretary at his prayers. Such an exhibition was actually to be seen. He and others, whose vices were notorious, might be observed kneeling at the altar, and receiving the sacrament. Even Swift, from whom St. John had a little while before stolen away to follow one of the painted strollers of the Mall, was, if not shocked, at least amused, when he learnt on what a devout business his great friend was engaged one fine Sunday morning. "I was early," he wrote, "with the Secretary to-day, but he was gone to his devotions, and

* See Journal to Stella of Aug. 24, 1711, and Voltaire's Correspondence. See also Enquiry into the Conduct of the Queen's Last Ministry; Mrs. Manley's True Relation of the Intended Riot; and Arbuthnot's Art of Political Lying.

to receive the sacrament; several rakes did the same; it was not for piety but employment, according to Act of Parliament." These men strongly objected to the Dissenters qualifying themselves for office by receiving the sacrament once or twice; nothing, according to St. John and his gay friends, could be more ruinous to Church and State than such occasional conformity; but they saw nothing wrong in their own perpetual conformity. So runs the world.

Many of the Secretary's Sundays during the summer months were passed at Windsor, whither the Queen used to go as soon as the Parliament was prorogued and the London season considered over. There was the same luxurious feasting, the same drunkenness, the same jollity, and late hours at the little town where Queen Anne then held her court as there had been in London. The two Secretaries of State took Windsor by turns, St. John going one week and Lord Dartmouth the other. St. John, on the Saturdays when it was his turn to go, managed to get the business of his office done by about two o'clock. His chariot at that hour was brought to the door. He drove to Windsor in about three hours, and generally dined as soon as he arrived. Sometimes he broke the journey by stopping at Lord Peterborough's residence near Parsons' Green, the house and grounds being placed at his disposal by the eccentric and versatile owner; and when the peaches, grapes, and apricots were ripe, spent an hour or two eating fruit in the pleasant gardens. On one occasion, when Swift was with him, the doctor thought fit to complain of being hungry, and they stopped at Brentford to get something to eat. A roast joint smoking hot was brought upon the table, which the statesman and his friend,

with two other gentlemen, heartily enjoyed; but the doctor's enjoyment was a little spoiled when the bill was brought in, and St. John, who loved to play tricks with Swift's penuriousness, called upon him to pay both for himself and the rest of the company. He then declared that he had only wanted some bread and butter, and "faith," said he, "it cost me a guinea; I don't like such jesting."

The jealousy which existed between St. John and Harley might have been observed in their treatment of Swift. The divine knew well how to play off one at the expense of the other. If Harley drove Swift to Windsor one week, St. John would do so the next. If he were brought down by Harley he would dine with St. John. If he dined with St. John he would have supper with Harley; and if Harley, who was sometimes late, had not yet arrived, he would walk two miles up the road at night to meet his carriage. The first time Swift came to Windsor, he was brought by the Lord Treasurer; the next week he of course accompanied the Secretary, who, to outdo Harley, gave Swift a bed in his own house, and, the next morning, the doctor's linen not having arrived, even lent him a shirt to go to court in.

As Secretary of State St. John had an apartment at the Castle, but finding it more convenient to have a habitation to himself, he had lent him a small house belonging to the prebendary. There he and his Under Secretary stayed, quietly writing and transacting business. Swift would sometimes spend a week at the house, composing, under St. John's direction, his famous pamphlet The Conduct of the Allies, to prepare the people for that peace which, during this summer at Windsor, was rapidly progressing. The facts of which

this treatise was composed were evidently derived from official information. Whoever examines carefully The Conduct of the Allies, must observe that though it was written with Swift's pen, and in that plain, homely manner which was in such striking contrast with the more fervid and oratorical style of St. John, yet that the knowledge displayed in it is such as only one who had filled the offices of Secretary at War and Secretary of State could possess. St. John and Swift, during these Windsor visits, were seen walking together for hours up the long avenue, and discoursing deeply on high affairs of State. Sometimes too, after midnight, when the company was gone, they would sit talking on the same subject by the fire far into the next morning. In this manner, St. John, without writing a sentence of it himself, supplied the materials for that treatise which produced so mighty an effect upon the public mind.

At Windsor, during this summer, St. John dined with a Club of Brothers, which he, in the spring, had been mainly instrumental in forming. It had, in fact, originated from his design, and appears to have been intended as a kind of Tory rival to the Kit Cat, in which the great Whig chiefs had so long met in fellowship together. As St. John projected it, this society was to consist of twenty members, who were all to be distinguished by political influence, social eminence, or by literary ability, and one of its principal objects was to constitute a body of patrons who could promote the interests of rising men of genius. There was not to be the extravagance of the Kit Cat; there was not to be the drunkenness of the Beefsteak; the meetings were all to be conducted with a strict regard to order and decency. The organization of the Club employed much of St. John's time and thoughts, though he certainly

had enough to do without any additional business; and amid all his other occupations he wrote long letters to his intimate friends, explaining the design, and requesting them to become members. At first they met at St. John's house, and afterwards at Oczinda's near St. James's. In the summer, when it assembled at Windsor, the club might be considered fairly established. Each member presided in his turn, and bore the expense of the dinner. The ministers of state, and Mrs. Masham's husband and brothers, represented the political influence of the club; two or three great noblemen the social rank; and Swift and Prior the men of wit. The members addressed each other as brother. But notwithstanding St. John's avowed intention, beyond each member subscribing a guinea a-head to a subscription for some very indifferent poetaster, it cannot be said that the Club, as a Club, did very much for learning and literary men. It became a mere meeting for dining and drinking; but, as such, undoubtedly answered one of the Secretary's purposes by promoting cordiality and friendship among the leading members of the Tory party.*

Cordiality and friendship were certainly necessary during these meetings at Windsor. Mrs. Masham just being confined, she was of course obliged to give over her personal attendance upon the Queen. Her rival, the Duchess of Somerset, who had received the Duchess of Marlborough's gold key, was supposed to increase in influence daily; and one Saturday night, a Cabinet Council was obliged to be postponed because St. John positively refused to sit at the board with the Duke of

* St. John's Letter to the Earl of Orrery, of June 12, 1711, gives the best account of his design in forming this club. See also Swift's Journal of June 21, 1711, and *passim*.

Somerset. While the cabinet was assailed in the outer circle, there were still dissensions even in the centre. The Secretary and the Treasurer continued to distrust and fear each other, and the Whigs were fully aware of their growing enmity which began to be openly talked about. Still it was St. John whom they expected to retire. They did not for one moment suppose that he could trip up the cautious and cunning prime minister.*

After so many scenes of riot and dissipation, it is a relief to contemplate the Secretary at his country seat. There he appeared in a more amiable light than in any in which he has yet been observed. Notwithstanding the defects of his character, his professed liking for the country and a rural life was a genuine love, and no mere affectation. While corresponding anxiously with Drummond about the conduct of the Duke of Marlborough, the pretensions of the Dutch, and the backwardness of the Emperor, the Secretary was not less anxious about some fine bay trees which were to be sent to him from Holland. He ordered one of his gardeners down to the coast to take them out of the ship, and see that they were properly conveyed to Bucklersbury, and displayed the greatest impatience to see with his own eyes that they were all that he had been given to expect.†

Bucklersbury, the country seat, which was part of the portion St. John received with his wife, was delightfully situated in agricultural Berkshire, about twenty-five miles from Windsor, and seven north-east of Newbury. During the weeks when it was his turn to be in attendance upon the Queen, he fre-

* Swift's Letter to Archbishop King, of Aug. 26, 1711.

† Letter to Mr. Drummond, May 15, 1711.

quently took the opportunity of driving to his rural home, spending a night or two there, and then returning to Windsor. Sometimes he took with him on these excursions a friend whom he wished to oblige. The Secretary appeared quite another man at Bucklersbury to what he did at Windsor and St. James's. He threw himself into all the pursuits of his neighbours with a zest which only real enjoyment can give; and the ambitious and somewhat boisterous statesman subsided into the model country gentleman. Even those who knew him best, as he was known in London, were surprised at the suddenness and completeness of the change. "I cannot," he said, "plunge myself so far into the thought of public business as to forget the quiet of a country retreat; and I am ready to go at an hour's warning." The remark was literally true: he certainly had a pleasant, and might have had a happy home. This fine estate and grounds, beautiful garden, stately woods in the background, and a mansion of the Elizabethan type, with its picturesque gables, carved cornices, and ornamental buttresses, a clear income from this property of three thousand a year, all derived from his wife, who did the honours of the house with much grace and refinement, and who really adored her husband as much as he would allow her to do, with his own wealth, rank, position in the state, youth, and genius, seemed to make the Secretary's cup of worldly bliss very full. He had several gardeners, who took his own orders for all improvements, and delighted to gratify his taste. He had a huntsman and a pack of hounds, whose deep notes might be heard in the stables. They all knew their master at his approach, and every hound he also knew by name. He would soon be surrounded by his

dogs, calling first for one and then for another, and taking care to remember and be remembered by them all. He would inquire about the crops of wheat in this or that field as earnestly as though his fortune and life depended upon the harvest. He would make one in a group of country neighbours, listen to all their gossip, and smoke with them pipes of tobacco. He would relate to a visitor the history of his wife's ancestor, the famous Jack of Newbury, whose picture hung in the hall. All this was very pleasant; but pleasanter than all was it to see the Secretary and his wife at this time doing especial honour to a guest, by themselves marching before him to his chamber with the large candlesticks in their hands, and the servants bringing up the rear in the old country style. The object of this honour, on one occasion, was Dr. Swift, who, in his best clergyman's gown and wig, doubtless stalked up to his bedroom after his obliging host and hostess with sufficient pride and gravity.*

But St. John's disposition did not allow him to indulge for any length of time in the tranquillity of country pursuits. Had he, indeed, then been ever so desirous of enjoying these rural pleasures, he could have afforded very few hours for their gratification. Just after returning to Windsor from one of these brief excursions, he suffered a deep mortification. News at length arrived of the expedition to North America under Jack Hill. It was an utter failure. Everything had gone wrong: the ships had been scantily provisioned; they were found to be too large for going up the river; several of the transports had been driven ashore in a storm; and the gallant brigadier, under the

* Journal to Stella, Aug. 4 and 5, 1711.

advice of that last resort of an incapable commander, a council of war, had returned, not only without doing anything, but even without attempting to do anything. Such was the end of the Secretary's project of adding all the French dominions in North America to the British crown. His best friends had always doubted the success of the expedition; but in his dream St. John persisted to the last. A little while before the intelligence of this shameful failure reached Whitehall, he confidently assured one of his correspondents that all North America was by that time in the possession of England. It seems strange that, with such an earnest wish his plan should succeed, the Secretary never thought of selecting from so many officers of great experience a commander of real ability. It was not given to a Jack Hill to be a Marlborough or a Wolfe: ministerial patronage, the consequence of his sister Abigail's favour with Queen Anne, might bestow upon the jovial brigadier military rank, but it could not confer upon him military capacity. He was sent to do what only an able officer could accomplish; and the Secretary justly shared his disgrace. On the day when the news reached Windsor Mrs. Masham wept, and St. John stormed; but the Lord Treasurer, who had always disapproved of the expedition, and was, in his heart, perhaps, not sorry for the Secretary's disappointment, was as gay and merry as ever. The mortification which the Secretary endured from his patronage of Jack Hill did not, however, put an end to their connection. It afterwards appeared that his indulgence to the favourite's brother went much further, and that he allowed Mrs. Masham herself to pocket some twenty thousand pounds out of the

public purse in a manner which made it nothing less than a direct robbery.*

Yet with all this compliance to Mrs. Masham and her brother, the Secretary still made little way at Court. Oxford continued, during the summer, to be Queen Anne's trusted counsellor; and she continued to look upon St. John with no favourable regard. What could be the cause? The Secretary fretted and fumed, and swore that he would not go on as he was much longer, that he would either be better or worse. At last he thought that he had found out the reason of the Queen's coldness for so many months. It appeared that he was still supposed to be closely allied with the Duke of Marlborough, and was regarded as one who, from the long friendship that had existed between them, was only lukewarm in some of the designs of the Court. Here was a pretty discovery: the idea threw St. John into a great rage. After all that he had done, it was too bad to be suspected of any remaining weakness with respect to the Duke. It was doing the Secretary a great injustice, and he felt it to be such; but St. John's attachment to Marlborough must, up to very recently, have been great indeed; for there can be no doubt that this opinion did prevail, not only with Mrs. Masham and the complacent courtiers round Queen Anne's tea table, but even in other well-informed circles, both at home and abroad.†

But though St. John in heart retained his old admi-

* See the Report of the Secret Committee; the first of the Additional Articles of Impeachment against the Earl of Oxford; the first of his answers to the Additional Articles; and Oxford's Brief Account of Public Affairs.

† Swift, writing to Archbishop King about the disagreement between the Secretary and the Treasurer on the 1st of August, 1711, observes: "They vary a little about a certain great general;" and even the Marquis de Torcy says of St. John: "On ne lui connoissoit aucune liaison avec Harley; il paraîssoit plutôt en avoir avec Marlborough."—Mémoires, ii. 13.

ration for the great military chief, he was not at all prepared to allow this feeling to stand in the way of his ambition. On this point he had no compunction whatever.

Marlborough had been sent very early in the year to his command in the Netherlands of which the Government had not yet ventured to deprive him. He had but just departed when the ministers allowed Swift to write the most severe attack that had yet been made upon him in the parody to Marcus Cassius.* Of this Marlborough complained to St. John, and St. John was all zeal and devotion. He said, what we may take the liberty of doubting, that he had not even read the paper which had given the Duke so much annoyance, and that he would see nothing of the kind should occur in future. "I have taken care," he remarked in a following letter, "to have the proper hint given to the Examiner, and your Grace may be assured that I cannot have a greater pleasure than to find it in my power to serve you." The letters between the Secretary and the Duke were at this time full of expressions of confidence and friendship; and Craggs, who was considered his Grace's creature, had many interviews with St. John to make the understanding complete. But the fact was that neither Marlborough nor St. John trusted each other, and that under the polished surface of their intercourse there was mutual deception and irreconcilable enmity. Yet when the intelligence came that the Duke had performed his last, and, in a military point of view, one of his greatest exploits, that of entering the French lines near Bouchain, all the Secretary's old enthusiasm revived, and he again addressed a congratulatory letter to Marlborough in

* The Examiner, No. 27.

the style he had hailed the conqueror of Ramillies of Oudenarde, and of Malplaquet. A mere official letter, he said, was not enough. "The hardest battles you have fought," wrote the Secretary to the general, "and the greatest victories you have won, cannot afford more honourable testimony of your Grace's superior capacity, and of your indefatigable zeal for the public service, than your late success. For my own part I have the joy which every honest man must feel when the common enemy receives a blow; and I have the additional satisfaction of a faithful friend in thinking that it was your Grace who gave it."*

After this brilliant feat of arms, the Dutch deputies were anxious that Marlborough should hazard a battle; this, however, his Grace thought fit to decline. Loud complaints were made against him in Holland, and they, of course, found their way to England. But St. John spoke of them most contemptuously, writing, both to Marlborough and Cadogan, letters full of friendly professions on this strange reverse of the situation, the Dutch deputies eager to fight, and the Duke resolved to avoid an engagement. Marlborough steadily pressed on the siege of Bouchain, and in September, Bouchain capitulated, the whole garrison surrendering prisoners of war. Once more St. John was all exultation, assuring Marlborough that he had sent an express to the queen with the news, ordered the Tower guns to fire, and again took such a part in the success as became an honest man. But these fine formalities of friendship came abruptly to an end. Marlborough's chaplain and literary trumpeter, Dr. Hare, published a sermon as preached before the Duke on the capture of Bouchain; and it was followed, from the pen of the same reverend author, by a

* Letter of July 31, 1711.—Corr., i. 177.

pamphlet entitled Bouchain; or, A Dialogue between the Medley and the Examiner. In these pamphlets Marlborough's triumphs were of course made the most of, and the policy by which the ministry was seeking to terminate the war was by implication as strongly censured. On perusing these manifestos, as St. John regarded them, of Marlborough's real sentiments, the Secretary became very angry. In the postscript of a letter intended to be seen by the Duke, he observed: "My Lord Marlborough's stupid chaplain continues to spoil paper. They had best, for their patron's sake as well as their own, be quiet. I know how to set them in the pillory, and how to revive fellows that will write them to the death."

St. John was as good as his word. There soon afterwards appeared a learned comment of Dr. Hare's sermon, written, as Swift says, by Mrs. Manley, with some hints from himself; but whoever peruses it attentively will suspect that many of the comments really came from St. John, as they are far superior to Mrs. Manley's usual style, and have much more resemblance to the brilliant and declamatory manner of the Secretary, than to Swift's plainer and simpler method of composition. This was followed by a still more virulent attack on the Duke, ripping up all the old slanders of his life, and adding many more, under the title of A New Vindication of the Duke of Marlborough.* It was also, under the Secretary's inspiration, the work of the ingenious Mrs. Manley, who naturally revelled in all the scandalous details of private history,

* Mrs. Manley regarded James II.'s connection with Marlborough's sister, Arabella Churchill, as a great honour, for which the duke ought to have been especially grateful. "James," says this authoress, "had honoured his Grace's family so far as to mingle his own blood with it."—A New Vindication of the Duke of Marlborough, 1711.

and showed that on such themes, a shameless literary vixen could be as fierce an antagonist as the cynical and remorseless Swift. Just as these pamphlets appeared, it became known that preliminaries of peace between France and England were signed in London without Marlborough, while commanding in the Netherlands, having been at all consulted, or even informed of the negotiations. This intelligence put an end to all friendship or appearance of friendship between the duke and St. John. Their correspondence, both official and private, came suddenly to an end. Marlborough, who had been so long the mainspring both of arms and of diplomacy, felt that in carrying on negotiations without himself being at all informed on the matter, notwithstanding St. John's friendly professions, a great slight had been put upon him by the ministers. Henceforth, he threw himself entirely into the hands of the Whigs; and the Duke and the Secretary kept no terms with each other. Whatever obstacle any suspected weakness with respect to Marlborough may have hitherto prevented St. John's favour at court, was finally removed out of his way. It is now time to relate the progress of these negotiations for peace, which had so powerfully contributed to bring about what the Secretary probably considered a very happy result.

CHAPTER VIII.

1711—1712.

NEGOTIATING THE PEACE OF UTRECHT.

Prior, accompanied by the Abbé Gaultier, reached France in safety about the middle of July, and repaired immediately to Fontainebleau. He first requested the French minister to inform him positively whether Louis XIV. was authorized to treat for his grandson the King of Spain. On receiving an answer in the affirmative, the poet produced a long memorial drawn up by St. John as Secretary of State, containing the particular propositions, to which clear and satisfactory answers were to be returned.

The State paper was divided into two parts. One embodied the preliminaries which England thought fit to stipulate for the allies; the other, the conditions which she desired for herself. On the side of the Netherlands she required a barrier for Holland, and on the side of the Rhine, another for the Emperor; that the strong places taken from her favoured ally, the Duke of Savoy, should be restored to him, and he should be put in possession of others in Italy; and that all the pretensions of the allies which were the legitimate consequence of treaties, should be carried out to

their general satisfaction. For these allies, it must be confessed, the propositions were not very definite. The demands which St. John, as the organ of the Government, through Prior and by this memorial, made for England were much more particular and precise. The mere willingness to treat, of course, was a virtual acknowledgement of Queen Anne as sovereign of Great Britain: and the ministers, whatever might be the inclination of some of them, could not but stipulate that the succession to the crown in the Protestant line, as established by Act of Parliament, should also be acknowledged. Next in importance, as it was then considered, to the inheritance to the crown, was the condition that the fortifications and works at Dunkirk should be destroyed, and the port blocked up. Another proposition, which at this day it is scarcely possible to consider without shame, was that to the two African companies of England should be transferred the Assiento Contract then held by a French company for the conveyance of negroes from the coast of Africa to America; and that suitable places in the West Indies should be ceded to refresh the slaves as they were being conveyed to the land of their bondage. There was to be a new commercial treaty. Gibraltar and Port Mahon were to be left to the British crown; and England was, with regard to Spain, to have all the advantages of the most favoured nation. France was to give up the island of Newfoundland, Hudson's Bay, and the Straits to England. In other respects the two nations were, in North America, to have all the places of which they should be in possession at the ratification of the treaties. This stipulation St. John thought highly advantageous to his country; for as the news of Hill's failure had not arrived when the

memorial was sent forth, the sanguine Secretary confidently believed that England would be in possession of all North America. There were three other conditions which were much more general, and which it was not so easy to carry into effect: that the crowns of France and Spain should never be united, nor worn by the same sovereign; that all the allies should be satisfied; and that trade should be restored and supported.

Prior was a great favourite of the French ministers. They fully believed that he wished for peace. But there was much in the propositions he made far from acceptable to Torcy and his colleagues. It was easy, they said, to talk about restoring and supporting trade; but if all that England asked were granted, the trade of France and of every other nation would be ruined. Still, to refuse these demands abruptly, was to hazard at the outset the miscarriage of the whole negotiation. The French ministers hoping to soften them in detail, began to debate each proposition. This, however, Prior plainly refused to do; his powers, he said, were very limited; he could only listen to what his Most Christian Majesty had to say to the proposals. To convince the French Minister for Foreign Affairs that this was all he could do, he showed his secret commission. It was contained in one sentence, written on a scrap of paper, and expressed in these laconic terms: "Mr. Prior is fully informed of our preliminary demands, and authorized to communicate them to France, and to bring back the answers to them." These few words were in the handwriting of St. John, and had the Queen's initials signed under them, A. R.

The French ministers were much disappointed on reading this strange commission. Their only comfort

was that the insulting preliminaries of the conferences of the Hague and of Gertruydenberg had been fully abandoned, and the Spanish throne left to Philip of Anjou. With that affectation of piety which was then so fashionable at the French Court, and which Ministers of State allowed to pervade even official despatches and diplomatic memoirs, Torcy observes on this subject: "God, who holds in his hands the heart of kings as He is the master of their fate, had fixed a period to the disgraces of the King of Spain, and softened the heart of the British Queen."* Nor, whatever faults may be found in other respects with St. John's manner of conducting this negotiation, can he be justly blamed of yielding to circumstances, and allowing Philip to reign peaceably at Madrid. To effectually conquer Spain for another competitor, must probably have taken ten years more of war. Besides, the death of the Emperor in the last April, had entirely altered the position of affairs. The House of Austria, with Spain and the Indies, Naples and Sicily, all united under the Imperial Crown, must have been quite as formidable as the House of Bourbon possessing both France and Spain. Even though the Archduke Charles had, as he declared himself ready to do, delegated his claim to the Spanish throne to a younger member of his family, as a question between Philip and any other rival, St. John was right in declaring that it was not worth to England the expenditure of a single life or a single charge of powder.† Another series of new campaigns to secure Spain for the House of Savoy would have been scarcely more justifiable. The time had undoubtedly come to make peace, and whatever Government

* Torcy's Mémoires, ii. 30.

† Letters on History.

had been in power in England after the Emperor's death, peace must have been made. All that Englishmen had a right to expect from St. John and his colleagues was, that this peace should be obtained on the best possible terms, and that if there were to be a disagreement among the allies about the conditions, England should be brought out of her engagements in such a way as to cast no stain upon her faith.

Unhappily this was not so. The manner in which the first clandestine advances were made to France through Gaultier, at the very time when the most positive assurances were given by St. John to the Dutch ministers, that no overtures were ever to be made to France at all, exactly corresponded with the style in which St. John continued to carry on these negotiations to the end. In direct breach of the article of the Grand Alliance, which stipulated that none of the contracting powers should privately negotiate with the enemy any advantages for itself, and independently of each other, Prior insisted upon it as an indispensable condition that these specific demands of England for herself should be kept quite secret, and particularly concealed from the Dutch. Nor is it sufficient to argue, as Bolingbroke afterwards did in his defence, that Holland, if she had had the opportunity, would have done the same thing. This is a bad excuse at the best; but it is not justified by facts. Holland had had the opportunity, and she had not done the same thing. Every attempt was made at the Hague and Gertruydenberg to separate her from the allies, and especially from England, and without success. All the preliminaries she insisted upon were invariably communicated to Marlborough, who knew everything that was going on; much more, indeed, than he did at this time of the

proceedings of his own Government, which studiously kept him ignorant of these negotiations. The French Secretary of State, the Marquis de Torcy himself, is the best witness for the good faith of Holland: his great cause of complaint is that every proposition made by himself at the Hague, and his emissaries at Gertruydenberg, was immediately communicated by the Dutch to the English Commander-in-chief, and that it was not possible to detach Holland from her allies.* Even the Barrier Treaty, which was so much railed at as a proof of the selfishness and rapacity of the Dutch, was a treaty which they were at perfect liberty to negotiate; it was made, not with France, the enemy, but England, the ally; and it was signed by Lord Townshend, the English plenipotentiary.

Besides refusing to debate the different clauses of St John's memorial, Prior demanded a specific answer in writing to each proposition. The French ministers were in the greatest embarrassment. To refuse the demand positively was to run the risk of breaking off the negotiations altogether; to agree to it was either to surrender at discretion, or to show how far France was averse from accepting what the English ministers considered indispensable for peace. They hit upon another expedient. They determined to send back with Prior and Gaultier an agent of their own, to discuss the different terms with the English Government. The person chosen for this delicate office was the deputy to the Chamber of Commerce of Rouen, M. Mesnager, who had already been engaged in the recent conferences of peace with the Dutch. He thought that he could persuade this country and her allies that they might gain more for their common

* Torcy's Mémoires, i., *passim*.

advantage by sharing in Spanish commerce, than by any cession of Spanish territories; and on questions of trade he appears to have entertained more liberal and sensible views than were prevalent among his contemporaries either in France or England.

Mesnager and his two associates in the work of peace, Prior and Gaultier, landed at Deal in the middle of August. Their first experience was not encouraging. They were arrested by a zealous Custom-house officer, and only released by a warrant sent down from St. John as Secretary of State, at Whitehall. He was delighted at Mesnager's mission, but expressed his regret, and the regret of his sovereign, that it would be necessary for the deputy to live some time in concealment. A week elapsed before Mesnager had his first confidential interview with the chiefs of the administration. But he was immediately asked for the answer in writing to St. John's memorial; and seeing that it would be hazardous to refuse it altogether, he wrote a paper, in reply, containing some remarks on each of the English propositions, and also what the French king demanded for himself and his allies. The first interview with the ministers took place at the house of the Earl of Jersey, whose suggestions about making the overtures to France through Gaultier had produced such important results, and who, dying shortly afterwards, was prevented from himself personally carrying out the business he had so succcessfully begun. As Mesnager explained in detail the concessions which France was prepared to make to England, the ministers listened to him with evident satisfaction; but no sooner did he begin to speak about the stipulations which his master expected in return, than he was heard with the greatest impatience, and at last abruptly cut short in his harangue. This,

St. John told him, was not to the question. All that he had to do was to be explicit on the terms France was prepared to grant to England. Mesnager and the French Government had hoped that the engagements would be reciprocal; that if France were ready to declare all the concessions she would make to England, England would, on her part, be willing to declare what particular advantages France might depend upon for herself and her allies, particularly the Electors of Bavaria and Cologne, whose restoration to their dominions Louis XIV. had deeply at heart. But St. John and his colleagues would not hear any mention of such conditions. After a conference of four hours' duration the council broke up in no satisfactory mood.

Two days afterwards St. John called on the French envoy, and asked him plainly to state whether he really was empowered to negotiate on the advantages to be conferred on England? The minister also expressed his surprise that the deputy should have thought fit to dilate on the general conditions of peace rather than on those which concerned England alone. Mesnager, though much mortified, declared himself ready to conform to the views of the English cabinet, and offered at once to send to France for new instructions. In the evening St. John returned, and suggested that Mesnager should himself go and consult the French Government. This, however, the wary envoy declined to do. He knew that it would be very much like breaking off the negotiations altogether, and frustrating all the hopes of that peace which had become so indispensable to France. After another interview with the ministers it was at last determined again to send Gaultier. He took with him another elaborate

paper from St. John's pen; and, that he might not be exposed to the interference of the authorities on the coast, he was accompanied by a Queen's messenger, and crossed the Channel in a packet provided by the Government.

A brief delay intervened. The ministers were far from unanimous in their opinion on Mesnager's mission; and some of them contemplated Gaultier's return with many misgivings. The manner in which the negotiations had been opened was not calculated to satisfy a very scrupulous conscience. Disguise the matter as St. John might to himself and to his colleagues, England was, in fact, negotiating for herself, and at the expense of her allies. What could be more unfair than for one power in the confederacy to make clear and express stipulations on her own account, and leave her partners in the war to take care of themselves at the general conferences for peace? To insist, for instance, at the outset that the fortifications of Dunkirk should be totally demolished, and to admit that, in return for this concession, Louis XIV. should have some equivalent in Flanders? St. John himself had no hesitation. He was bold, resolute, determined, ready to answer all objections, and to bear down all opposition; but there were among his colleagues men who looked on the whole business with dislike and distrust, and feared that they might one day be called to a strict account. Of these, in particular, was the Duke of Shrewsbury, the Chamberlain. Though at heart a Whig, and conscientiously attached to the Protestant succession, he had been flattered by Harley to attach himself to his ministry, and after the Treasurer himself had played the most important part in the recent changes. But he was timid and hesitating by nature, had little sympathy with his

associates, distrusted their intentions, and regarded Mesnager's mission with much suspicion. His character was in many respects the very antithesis of St. John's. He was always tortured by scruples and doubts, was vacillating, and temporizing, and became perplexed and fearful, when it was necessary to act and be decided. Still his patriotism was great. He felt that his colleagues and himself were doing wrong; and he had his fears of the day of reckoning. When it was determined to send Gaultier across the Channel for further instructions, Shrewsbury's suspicions of Me nager, and the designs of France, greatly increased. St. John wrote him two letters, enclosing papers, and earnestly requesting him to be at Windsor to assist his colleagues in their deliberations about the peace. Shrewsbury promised to attend; but took occasion, in his reply, to exhibit his doubts and perplexities on the negotiations. "As to what we demand for ourselves," he wrote to St. John, "I hope it has been well considered, and is so beneficial to the nation, that it will warrant the concessions we are obliged to make; but I am so ignorant in those affairs, that I shall trouble you with nothing upon them. But as I still continue to mistrust the sincerity of the French, and that these are nothing but arts to sow division among us, so, one time or other, I conclude these papers will be made public; in which case, though we know her Majesty has a fair and just intention with relation to the allies, yet in these papers little notice having been taken of their interests, neither in general words nor in particular, it may look suspiciously, as if her party had no consideration but of what concerns Britain; and having settled that with France would leave her friends to shift for themselves at a general treaty, in which her partiality

might be liable to suspicion, since she had beforehand stipulated for herself: this as it is far from her design, so in all the papers that pass, a more than ordinary care should be taken to explain that to the world. I remember to have seen, in a paper delivered in by M. Mesnager, some propositions so disadvantageous to the allies, that I question whether notice should not be taken of them, as the articles, that of the Elector of Bavaria's having Flanders, and I think some others; for if ever all these papers should be made public, silence on such a subject might fall within the suspicion of consent. . . . . Looking over the papers again, I am more of opinion that there is something in them that looks like bargaining for yourselves apart, and leaving your friends to shift at a general treaty, that I am confirmed the exposing such a paper (as it will be in the power of France to do), may create great jealousy and complaint from the allies."*

One of the demands which Gaultier carried over from England to France was that Mesnager's powers might be altered. He was originally authorized to treat with England or any other of the allies at war with France; but the English ministers requested that he might be authorized to negotiate with them alone. This was very significant. Of course the King of France made no difficulty in agreeing to what St. John desired. A memorial was also drawn up, consenting, on the part of Louis, to defer till the general treaty of peace an equivalent for the demolition of Dunkirk, and accepting, more or less, most of the other propositions contained in the paper brought by Gaultier from the English Secretary of State. His Most Chris-

* Letter to St. John, Aug. 27, 1711.

tian Majesty, indeed, regretted that England would insist in her own demands, and would not, in return, bind herself as to the terms which France had to expect; but this politic sovereign consented with a good grace to what St. John and his colleagues in this respect desired. The king knew all the advantages he could reap from such a method of negotiation. Already England was virtually separated from her allies, and was evidently more friendly to France than to Holland.

Gaultier reached London again in the third week of September. He supped privately with the Treasurer, who expressed his joy at the king's condescension in the liveliest terms, and as soon as his servants had withdrawn, Oxford, who was himself, perhaps, as usual, a little elevated from claret, declared that he regarded Mesnager as an intimate friend, and that he looked upon his master as the good ally of England; and filling his glass three times, he drank first the health of Louis, then that of the Dauphin, and concluded with toasting the French ministers. But when the cabinet assembled some days afterwards at Prior's to consider the papers which Gaultier had brought, everything was not quite so satisfactory. Mesnager was kept waiting for some time. On being introduced he observed on the countenances of the ministers evidences of distrust and agitation. Shrewsbury, in particular, appeared deeply moved. The Duke read and re-read the new powers which had been sent to Mesnager in a hesitating and suspicious manner, pausing at every sentence, and weighing every expression as though he were anxious to find fault with a document which was, however, unexceptionable. The ministers then began to consider the memorial containing the reply to the propositions

they had made; but still appeared very anxious and embarrassed. Instead of looking like the rulers of a great empire, they seemed like a group of conspirators, watching each other with jealous eyes and lowering brows. Shrewsbury's agitation became greater than ever. But St. John's manner was in striking contrast with that of his colleagues, and particularly with that of Shrewsbury. The Secretary read out loudly the papers with marked emphasis, and to each article of the answer he gave the warmest approbation. He had none of Shrewsbury's doubts, fears, nor scruples. On this question of peace, St. John appeared to Mesnager the one decisive man in the cabinet.*

After the papers had been read there was some discussion about Louis' reservation of the right to fish on the banks of Newfoundland, the Assiento Contract, and the cession of the island of St. Christopher. Then came a long and embarrassing silence. It was at length broken by St. John, who drily remarked, that "It was prohibited by Act of Parliament to treat with any prince who received the Pretender." This was the real cause of the agitation which Mesnager had observed on the faces of the ministers as he entered the room. No intimation had yet been made, in the course of the negotiations, that as in the conferences of the Hague and Gertruydenberg the unhappy exile would have to leave France, and the omission had been the cause of a warm debate. But Mesnager had some reason to

* "Le duc de Shrewsbury lut le pouvoir, et le relut plusieurs fois. Mesnager crut remarquer qu'il le lisoit avec l'attention d'un homme qui désiroit d'y trouver quelque difficulté et quelque sujet de contestation. . . . . Shrewsbury désiroit cependant la paix autant qu'aucun des autres ministres: tous étoient frappés de la crainte d'un temps que peut-être ne seroit pas éloigné; et nonobstant leurs bonnes intentions, la réflexion les retenoit, à l'exception de Saint Jean. Il lut tout haut les pièces que Mesnager venoit de remettre: il donnoit à chaque article des marques d'approbation."—Torcy, ii. 58.

complain that this objection should only be raised seven or eight months after the English ministers had themselves made the overtures for peace, and particularly just after he had received from his sovereign a new power in accordance with the terms they had themselves demanded. He observed that the Chevalier was about setting out on a journey through the different provinces of France, and who could tell where he might be when the regular Conferences for peace began?

This diplomatic intimation was considered satisfactory. All obstacles between the two Governments were not, however, removed. St. John had several separate interviews with Mesnager at Prior's; he set himself the task of smoothing each obstacle to peace as it arose; at one time the negotiations seemed actually on the point of breaking off through the difficulties which his colleagues threw in the way: but at last everything yielded to the Secretary's ardour and resolution. At Whitehall on the 27th of September, according to the old style, and the 8th of October, according to the new, the preliminaries were signed by St. John and Dartmouth, as the English Secretaries of State, and by Mesnager as the envoy of the French King.*

The next day, for the first time, Mesnager, accompanied by Gaultier and another priest, the Abbé de Polignac, were seen in the Secretary's lodgings at Windsor. Their appearance excited much attention, and gave rise to some conjectures. It was whispered that they were secret agents from France, that negotiations were making rapid progress, and that a peace would soon be concluded. At eight o'clock in the evening St. John conducted Mesnager by a secret staircase to the Queen's

* See St. John's Letters to the Queen, of Sept. 26 and 27, 1711, and the preliminaries in the Bol. Corr., i. 233.

room. Her Majesty received him very graciously, and declared her readiness to do all in her power to put an end to the war. After kissing her royal hand, and taking his leave, Mesnager was led out by the Secretary through the same private passage, the only persons who saw them being a confidential waiting woman, in the antechamber, and two sentinels at the door. That night Mesnager, the two priests, Swift, and St. John, supped together at the Secretary's lodgings; and after the Frenchmen left, St. John and Swift sat up until two o'clock talking about that peace, the preliminaries of which had just been signed. Prior took Mesnager back to London in the morning, and cautioned him not again to present himself at the Secretary's house, for that spies constantly watched it on the part of the Whigs, and that it was still necessary to use the greatest circumspection.*

St. John's most serious difficulties about the peace indeed only began after these preliminaries were signed. Mesnager departed for France, carrying with him a friendly and complimentary letter from the Secretary to Torcy, and the newly created Earl of Strafford crossed over to Holland with the paper of preliminaries, which it was necessary to communicate to the Dutch; but there was another separate paper with which neither they nor the ambassador himself were at the time made acquainted. Of this want of confidence, Strafford afterwards complained to St. John, and the Secretary exculpated himself with much earnestness; "For God's sake, my Lord," St. John wrote to Strafford, "be persuaded that I have less cunning, and more frankness; and that of all people in

* See Swift's Journal, Sept. 28 and 30, 1711, and Torcy's Mémoires, ii. 73 and 74.

the world I would not begin playing tricks with one whom I have corresponded and lived so happily with, and in whose bottom I am now embarked upon the greatest and nicest occasion that was perhaps ever to be managed. I conjure you to have no jealousies of a man who will always try to deserve your confidence."*

Strafford on landing in Holland found Buys, the Pensionary of Amsterdam, waiting, as was then usual, for a fair wind to cross over to England. His object was to counteract the negotiations which were known to be in progress. His confidence in his powers of oratory and persuasion had not diminished. "Buys," St. John wrote, "depends on his rhetoric, and thinks to impose, of which imagination he will certainly be the dupe." With the Secretary of State, the Queen, and Lords of the Council, the good burgomaster persisted in trying the effects of his eloquence. Holland, he assured them, was prepared to do her part in the war. No sacrifice would be too great for her to make that it might be brought to a triumphant conclusion. Peace he admitted to be very desirable; but were the English ministers taking the best method to promote it by leaving the allies to take it up themselves at a general congress? Would they not by this means be left exposed to the machinations of France? Surely it would be much better to settle clearly the preliminaries as at the Hague and Gertruydenberg, than to see the alliance in danger of being divided against itself. Thus Buys spoke and reasoned in a series of elaborate orations; but he only convinced himself: it was then impossible for the English Government to change the plan of negotiations they had adopted; and the Dutch states-

* Letter to the Earl of Strafford, 1711.

man's argumentative speeches were considered very long, and very wearisome. Count de Gallas kept no terms with the queen's advisers. As soon as he had obtained a copy of the preliminaries, he took care to have them published in the Daily Courant; he threw himself entirely into the hands of the Whigs; and to his master, the Emperor, spoke of the English ministers as a set of fools and knaves, who were betraying both their own sovereign and her allies. St. John took the extreme step of forbidding Gallas, in the name of the Queen, to present himself at Court, and ordering him to leave the country. The envoy of the Duke of Savoy also declared that the interests of his master had not been sufficiently taken care of in the preliminaries. All the allied Courts were in commotion, and the Whigs were furious. Marlborough, too, returned to England the determined opponent of the Government. Menaces and cajolery could not prevent him from informing the queen that he entirely disapproved of the manner in which her ministers were negotiating the peace. The Secretary, however, believed that Marlborough could be made to suffer for his hostility to the administration. "His fate," said St. John, "hangs heavily upon him."*

In such an excited state of the public mind, of course, the pamphleteers were very busy. So also were St. John's messengers in apprehending, under his warrant as Secretary of State, all who could as authors, printers, or publishers be construed to have any hand in attacking the Government. St. John himself had literary abilities, and he was himself a patron of letters, but it is to his disgrace as a statesman, that no Secretary of State ever carried on a more harassing persecution

* St. John to the Earl of Strafford.

of the press. Everything that could be regarded as a libel on the Government was by him mercilessly seized and punished; while Swift, the most unscrupulous of political writers, was encouraged, under the Secretary's protection, to assail, with rancorous satire and ribaldry, all the opponents of the ministry. The renegade divine boasted of the protection he received, and of the means of vengeance at his command. For two or three allusions to Swift, not one-tenth part so severe as the reverend doctor was daily writing against others, Boyer was taken up, and his case was but a specimen of many others of the same kind. "One Boyer, a French dog," Swift wrote to Stella, "has abused me in a pamphlet, and I have got him up in a messenger's hands; the Secretary promises me to swinge him; I must make that rogue an example, for warning to others."* St. John was equally ready to boast, even to Majesty itself, of what he was doing, as a political and literary censor. In writing to the Queen at this time, he observed: "I have discovered the author of another scandalous libel who will be in custody this afternoon: he will make the thirteenth I have seized, and the fifteenth I have found out."† A few days afterwards, when the courts of law were opened after the long vacation, no less than fourteen printers, publishers, and booksellers, who had been arrested under St. John's warrant, were placed at the bar for being concerned in the publication of what he pleased to call libels on the Government. Well and truly did the Whig counsel, Lechmere, argue against the injustice of committing people without specifying their crimes. "If," said he, "the minister is to act in this manner, the office of the Secretary of State must

* Journal, Oct. 16, 1711. † Corr., i. 255.

become a Spanish Inquisition." The Attorney-General however, succeeded in having all the fourteen accused persons bound over on their recognizances to the end of the term.*

Swift was still busy, under St. John's direction, preparing The Conduct of the Allies, which was to be ready for publication about the time of the meeting of Parliament. Queen Anne had gone to Hampton Court; and thither the ministers went down on the Saturday, and generally came back on the Monday, just as they had done at Windsor. At Hampton Court, however, the Secretary had no accommodation for a friend, and Swift was not a man to go to any expense he could himself help for lodgings and dinner: he therefore was left behind in London, while St. John, with his pocket stuffed with the proof sheets of The Conduct of the Allies, went to attend upon the Queen.†

Two brief notes from St. John to Swift were written during one of these visits. The first shows us that even a busy Secretary of State can find time to listen to any scandal about a political opponent:—

"Hampton Court, Nov. 16, 1711.

"I return you the sheet, which is, I think, very correct. Sunday morning I hope to see you.

"I am, sincerely,

"Your hearty friend and obedient servant,

"H. ST. JOHN.

"P.S.—I have a vile story to tell you of the moral philosopher, Steele."

St. John in his haste sent Swift the wrong proof, and on the next day wrote again to him as follows:—

* See Annals of Queen Anne, 1711, 264.

† See Journal to Stella, Nov. 3, 15, 18, 1711.

"Dear Doctor,

"I ask pardon for my mistake, and I send you the right paper.

"I am, in sickness and in health,

"Ever your faithful friend,

"H. St. John."

The winter was now approaching. It promised to be a most eventful one. Plenipotentiaries were being appointed for the Congress which was to meet at Utrecht; the time for the meeting of Parliament was drawing nigh; and country members were coming up in batches to town. St. John, with more than his usual ardour, was preparing for the political campaign. Golden Square, lying to the north of Leicester Fields, and to the south of the Oxford Road, had just been built, and was considered the most magnificent and fashionable part of the metropolis. There the Secretary, determined not to be outdone, had a new house, which was being splendidly furnished and decorated. In the mean time Mrs. St. John and himself lodged at a Dr. Cotesworth's. But at the house of Brigadier William Breton, whom he on the following year sent as ambassador to Berlin, the Secretary was more at home, and was accustomed to dine when he wished to avoid company. The lady of the house was about five-and-thirty years of age, had some reputation for gallantry, and was considered a great wit. St. John was one of her greatest admirers; and her husband, the brigadier, was his confidential friend. After a day's hard work at the office, the Secretary, in his chair, might frequently be seen proceeding to Breton's when he did not go to Prior's. A bottle of good wine and a substantial meal were there always at

his command on those post days when for hours he had had scarcely time to break his fast. If the Secretary was nowhere else to be found it was generally supposed that he must be "at Breton's;" and to Breton's those who were most in St. John's intimacy frequently repaired.

Just at this time, before the Secretary's mansion in Golden Square was quite ready, he became alarmed lest it should be demolished by a riotous mob. On the 17th of November, the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's birthday, a grand procession was supposed to have been arranged by the Whig chiefs at the Kit Cat; images of the devil, the pope, the cardinal, Sacheverel, and the Pretender were to be carried at midnight through the streets by torchlight, and to be burnt in effigy. It was said that immense sums had been subscribed to give due effect to the popular ceremony, and that, as in the similar demonstration arranged by Shaftesbury and the country party during the time of the Exclusion Bill, the populace was to be encouraged to rise and overawe the court and government. The Ministers affected the greatest alarm, and accused the Whigs of the darkest purposes, of riot, pillage, and assassination. On the night before that of the intended procession, the images were seized by an order of the Secretary of State, and were conveyed to his office. One of these waxen effigies was represented as like the Lord Treasurer, and another was perhaps not quite so handsome, as Mr. Secretary St. John; but it turned out that they were neither so costly nor so artistic as they had been supposed, and that the demonstration, had the Government not prevented it, would have been, after all, of a very harmless nature. The Whigs ridiculed the pre-

tended panic of the Ministers; and even St. John's friends admitted that his apprehensions had had very little foundation.*

It was convenient, however, to suspect the Whigs of the most diabolical machinations. The time for the meeting of Parliament arrived. It was confidently reported that a desperate effort was to be made in the House of Lords, where the opposition was at least equal, if not numerically superior, to the Court, to put a stop to the negotiations for peace. All the arts of the Junto in close alliance with Godolphin and Marlborough were to be tried; the whole strength of the Whig party, reinforced by that champion of the Church, the Earl of Nottingham, was to be put forth. Now or never was the time. St. John, with his characteristic ardour, rejoiced at the coming struggle. "Friday next," he said, "the peace will be attacked in Parliament. I am glad of it; for I hate a distant danger which hovers over my head. We must receive their fire and rout them once for all."†

The enemies of the Government were not so easily routed as the Secretary anticipated. On the 7th of December, when the Parliament met, Nottingham, in the House of Lords, moved an amendment to the address, representing to her Majesty that no peace could be safe or honourable if Spain and the West Indies were left to the House of Bourbon; and after a long debate, in which most of the great Whig peers, and the Dukes of Somerset and Marlborough supported the clause, it was carried against the Court. Nor was this the only mortification the Ministry had to endure. The Queen was present during the discussion, and on leaving the House

* See Swift's Journal, Nov. 17, 18, 19, 26, 1711.

† Letter to Lord Strafford, Dec. 4, 1711.

of Lords gave her hand to the Duke of Somerset, that he might escort her to her carriage. It was supposed that his wife, who had succeeded the Duchess of Marlborough as Groom of the Stole, and to whom Queen Anne was known to be attached, was doing to Mrs. Masham what Mrs. Masham had herself done to the Duchess of Marlborough. The Duke of Somerset had distinguished himself as one of the opponents of the peace; and it was by his representations that many needy peers had been induced to vote against the Government. Dismay sat upon the countenances of the courtiers. The Lord Treasurer was loudly blamed for his mismanagement: he seemed at once to have lost both his influence over the Queen and the Parliament. Majorities, in such circumstances, have a natural tendency to increase. The Lords passed other resolutions condemnatory of the Government; and at Christmas the Ministers had lost all control over the deliberations of the Upper House. Nothing shows more clearly the evil of a Government depending on back-stair influence and feminine intrigue than the panic which the mere suspicion that the Duchess of Somerset had really supplanted Mrs. Masham in her Sovereign's favour produced among the dependents of the Ministry. Swift, who had grossly abused the favour he enjoyed with St. John and Oxford, and who had something of the twin disposition of the bully and coward in his nature, was in a perfect fright. He gave up all for lost, and besought the two ministers to send him on some foreign mission, that he might be out of the way of the vengeance he knew he had deserved. He meditated hiding some time, and then stealing over secretly to his willows and vicarage at Laracor.

While all was shaking around him, St. John appears

to have acted a firm and courageous part. He had, indeed, left himself no retreat: the attack on the peace was more an attack on the Secretary of State, who was conducting the negotiations, than even upon the Treasurer; but at this crisis, at all events, Oxford had no reason to complain of his colleague. St. John assured Swift that he was in no danger; that he would take care of him as he would of himself; that everything would yet be well; that in a little while the wisdom of the Lord Treasurer would appear greater than ever; and the Secretary swore that either the Duke and Duchess of Somerset should be turned out of their places, or he would himself resign his seals of office.*

The difficulty was not settled until the 31st of December. On that day a Gazette appeared containing the names of eleven new peers, and concluding with the announcement that the Duke of Marlborough had been dismissed from all his employments. Twelve new peers were, in fact, created for the express purpose of swamping the Whig majority in the House of Lords. Such a step, unprecedented in the constitutional history of England, could only be excused by the most extreme necessity: it may well be doubted whether any object which the ministers then had in view could justify such an extraordinary exercise of the royal prerogative. This act, however, suited St. John's daring and impetuous nature, and, at the time, had his hearty approval. On the 2nd of January, 1712, when the new peers went to take their seats, and the Tories, thus reinforced, were to try their strength on the motion for the adjournment of the House, the Secretary stood in the Court of Requests waiting to know the result of the division. On being

* See Swift's Journal, Dec. 8, 9, and 13, 1711.

informed that the Court had carried the question by a majority of one, he said, impetuously, "If those twelve had not been enough, we would have given them another dozen."*

St. John was, indeed, himself very nearly being created one of the new peers. He wished to follow Harley into the Upper House, and feel his brow also adorned with a coronet. For the time, however, his presence in the House of Commons was found to be indispensable. He alone, since the prime minister had left the scene, could lead the Tory majority, sustain by his brilliant oratory the weight of debate, and carry the negotiations for peace triumphantly through the stormy assembly. It was, however, generally rumoured that as soon as the peace should be concluded, and the session come to an end, he was to be raised to the peerage; and he was himself given to understand that he should lose nothing in rank by having his promotion deferred.†

During the session which had just begun, St. John then remained in the House of Commons. At the head of an overwhelming majority, the acknowledged leader of the House, and without a rival in administration or debate, everything was done under his immediate superintendence. His personal influence was immense: the Tory majority seemed under his will, and to obey implicitly the direction of his single mind. "I sat in Parliament," Bolingbroke afterwards observed, "during the whole of that important session

* Boyer's Annals of the Reign of Queen Anne. But while Bolingbroke was in exile even he could speak of this measure "as unprecedented and invidious, to be excused by nothing but the necessity, and hardly by that."—Letter to Sir W. Windham.

† See St. John's Letter to Lord Strafford of July 23, 1712, and Swift's Journal of Dec. 29, 1711.

which preceded the peace, and which, by the spirit shown through the whole course of it, and by the resolutions taken in it, rendered the conclusion of the treaties practicable. . . . . I never look back on this great event, past as it is, without a secret emotion of mind, when I compare the vastness of the undertaking, and the importance of the end with the means employed to bring it about, and with those which were employed to traverse it." It was on the manner in which he, as with one hand, led the House of Commons, and with the other directed the negotiations at Utrecht, that he based his highest claims as a practical statesman. For what passed, both in debate and diplomacy, he must be held mainly responsible; and here we might expect his sagacity, wisdom, and patriotism to appear.

It must, however, be candidly confessed that during this celebrated session, in the proceedings of the House of Commons under St. John's guidance, we find little more than the unrestrained exercise of the old spirit of party vengeance, such as the Tory majorities had formerly displayed in the last years of the reign of William and the first of the reign of Anne. On the first day of the session, in the speech which was put into the mouth of the Queen, her advisers thought it becoming to make her Majesty congratulate her subjects that negotiations for peace were progressing, "notwithstanding the arts of those who delight in war." Everything in the House where St. John sat and gave the law to his obedient majority, was, from the beginning to the end of the session, in strict conformity with this undisguised exhibition of royal partisanship. No effort was left unemployed to stigmatise the political opponents of the ministry by reso-

lutions, addresses, votes of censure, and all the machinery of Parliamentary condemnation.

The Duke of Marlborough was the most illustrious victim. Some colourable excuse was to be found for depriving the great General of his command. This measure, which was in truth the mere effect of Mrs. Masham's personal animosity, was to be justified by his imputed corruptions. Early in the session, another report from the Commissioners for examining the public accounts was presented to the House, informing the Commons of several abuses which they pretended to have discovered. Two of these alleged abuses related to certain perquisites which were paid to the Commander-in-chief, in the contracts for supplying the army with bread, and to deductions of two and a half per cent. from the pay of the foreign troops, sent over to the Duke, but never accounted for by him as public money. His Grace declared, in explanation of the charge about the contracts for bread, that this perquisite had always been allowed to the commander-in-chief in Flanders, and for the two and a half per cent. deductions, he produced even the Queen's warrant, stating, at the same time, that the money had been applied to the secret service. The Duke was certainly not a man to neglect any means of enriching himself which precedent had authorized. This, however, all who examine the question impartially, will admit to be in this case the full extent of his delinquency. The only surprise is, that much greater abuses were not discovered. Marlborough's defence of himself, if not triumphant, at least shows that there was little to find fault with, except his having been so unfortunate as to incur the bitter enmity of the Queen and Mrs. Masham. Indeed, St. John, in his private letters, even admits this

to have been the real foundation of the charges, and the reason of the resolutions which, under his leadership, the House of Commons was induced to pass, censuring these practices. In a strain which would have better become a Turkish vizier than an English Secretary of State, he observes: "What passed on Thursday in the House of Commons, will, I hope, show people abroad as well as at home, that no merit, no grandeur, no riches can excuse, or save any one, who sets himself up in opposition to the Queen. The whole debate was so managed as to show evidently to what the Duke was to ascribe his fall."*

After Marlborough, Walpole had, perhaps, incurred the deepest resentment of the ministers, and certainly of St. John himself. Cardonnel, the Duke's secretary, was made to participate in his disgrace, being declared guilty of corruption, and without ceremony expelled from the House of Commons. But Walpole, the rival Secretary at War, the rival political leader on the other side of the House, the able defender of Godolphin's administration of the Treasury, the master of figures and the details of finance, the fearless opponent of St. John at the head of his unscrupulous majority, was in a particular measure the object of the Secretary's vengeance. Thirteen years afterwards, in an answer to one of Bolingbroke's attacks upon him, Walpole wrote: "I despise all that a man in the impotence of disgrace can do against me, for you could never terrify me in the zenith of your power;"† and it must be admitted, though it ought not to excuse his shortcomings in his future prosperity, that the aspiring

* St. John's Letter to the Earl of Strafford, Jan. 27, 1712. Marlborough's Vindication will be found in the Parl. Hist., vi. 1079.

† An Answer to the Occasional Writer, 1726.

leader of the Whigs, in this the season of his adversity, confronted St. John and his intemperate legions of the October Club, with a dauntless front. Since Walpole was not to be intimidated, the Secretary resolved to destroy him. In the report of the Commissioners about the contracts for bread and the deductions from the pay of the foreign troops, there was also another charge relating to the contracts for forage in Scotland. It was alleged that Robert Walpole, the late Secretary at War, had received, either by himself or his agent, Mr. Mann, two different sums, each of five hundred guineas, from the forage contractors. Walpole explained that a fifth share in these contracts had been expressly reserved for his friend, Robert Mann; that the contractors chose to pay Mann these sums rather than admit him into the partnership; that such arrangements were then very usual in the public service; and that, as Secretary at War, he received no advantage whatever from the bargains. St. John, too, as his correspondence with the Duke of Marlborough shows, had, while himself Secretary at War, been far from averse to pocket all the per centages he could obtain; only during the preceding year, as Secretary of State, he had allowed Jack Hill and Mrs. Masham, on account of the expedition to Canada, to appropriate an immense sum of public money to their own use in a manner much more flagrant than, the difference of circumstances and persons considered, anything that had been charged against either Marlborough or Walpole; and it was with the greatest management that the House of Commons was at this time prevented from inquiring into this misappropriation of at least twenty thousand pounds.* Nevertheless, the Minister had no compunction

* See Oxford's Brief Account of Public Affairs.

in driving matters to extremity against his late successor in the War Office. Walpole was voted guilty of notorious corruption; he was committed to the Tower; he was even expelled the House, and at length pronounced incapable of being re-elected to serve in the existing Parliament. All sense of fairness and decency was not, however, extinguished in the breasts of the more moderate members of the Tory party. In the course of these strong measures against his political rival, St John found his majority perceptibly diminish. Walpole's amendment to the address, on the first day of the session, had been defeated by one hundred and twenty-six votes; but the resolution declaring him guilty of notorious corruption was only carried by a majority of fifty-two, his expulsion by twenty-two, and his committal to the Tower by twelve.*

St. John himself had afterward no excuse to offer for proceedings so violent and discreditable. He avowedly acted on the most extreme line of party hostility, and regarded all measures as justifiable which could injure a political opponent. His conduct to Walpole, especially, was afterwards, with other proceedings which Bolingbroke would gladly have buried in oblivion, recalled to his recollection when he was himself at the mercy of his foes, and complained loudly of the persecution to which he was subjected. His outcries against the hardships he was made to endure might have been listened to with more sympathy if it could have been shown that in this his day of power he had acted in one single instance with candour and generosity towards a political adversary.

The measures against Marlborough and Walpole

* Parl. Hist., vi. 1071.

were precipitated by the arrival of Prince Eugene in England. He ostensibly came over to make certain proposals on the part of the Emperor to take upon himself a greater proportion of the Spanish war; but the real object of his mission was to strengthen the hands of Marlborough and the Whigs, and by his popularity to encourage the opponents of the peace. The ministers beheld his arrival with displeasure and anxiety. St. John had written strongly to the ambassadors abroad to prevent the prince undertaking such a journey at such time, and employing, indeed, every means but her Majesty's direct prohibition. Even this extreme step might have been taken had not Eugene arrived earlier than was expected; but he was, in fact, off the coast of England before the Secretary's last despatches on the subject had left the shores. Since Eugene had come it was necessary for the ministers to make the best of his journey. He was everywhere received with the greatest hospitality; her Majesty presented him with a sword mounted with diamonds, worth four thousand pounds; and his reception at St. James's was gracious and magnificent. On the day of his presentation to the Queen, he had, however, no large periwig to go to court in, and Hoffman, the German envoy, assured him that the absence of such a head-dress would be considered a gross breach of etiquette. St. John, to whom the prince related his perplexities on this question, assured him that it was of no consequence; though the Secretary, not to lose favour in the eyes of his royal mistress, who was observant enough on such matters, himself wore such a huge periwig that it quite shut out the illustrious general from the sight of the bystanders. St. John also gave a great banquet to Eugene; but Swift, who had been

vainly anxious to have the honour of dining with the prince, was not invited; and he could only console himself with the reflection that the Secretary and his guests would be all drunk.*

Swift did not hesitate to charge Prince Eugene with most disgraceful projects of insurrection and assassination. But, as Walter Scott observes,† Swift gave no authority whatever for so shameful an imputation on a brave soldier. The only foundation for the charge was the allegation of French and English spies, who evidently reported what they believed might please their patrons. A paper of this kind, obtained by very disgraceful means and pretending to give the substance of certain communications between Eugene and the Court of Vienna during his stay in England, was actually read in the Committee of Privy Council. According to this document, Marlborough and Godolphin proposed that St. John and Oxford should be De-Witted. The French ministers also, through Gaultier, informed the English Government that the Mohocks, who were then frightening respectable citizens out of their senses by their rumoured outrages at night in the streets of London, had been set on by Marlborough; that he was meditating the seizure of the Tower, and even the person of the Queen; and that Eugene had entertained a project of setting fire to London. These wild imputations are not entitled to the slightest credit. Marlborough was certainly not inclined to embark in any

* "Prince Eugene dines with the Secretary to-day with about seven or eight general officers or foreign ministers. They will be all drunk, I am sure. I never was in company with this prince. I have proposed to some lords that we should have a sober meal with him; but I cannot compass it."—Swift's Journal, Feb. 17, 1712.

† Scott's edition of Swift, note to The History of the Four Last Years.

desperate scheme, of which his enemies, including the Queen and Lady Masham, Oxford and St. John, would have gladly laid hold to send him to the scaffold. And even though he had been so foolish as to form such a design, he was not so foolish as to talk about it in the hearing of spies, or trust it to the mercy of the post. The great Whig chiefs with whom he was closely allied, Halifax and Somers, were essentially men of the gown and not of the sword; and their advice at this trying time was, as their bitterest opponents have acknowledged, strictly moderate and constitutional. They knew, what those who were then leading the House of Commons on the most extreme party principles had altogether overlooked, that to every reaction in England there is a rebound, and that the day of retaliation and vengeance would assuredly come.*

Carrying out his idea of making his political enemies and the allies of England acknowledge that a new spirit had taken possession of Parliament, St. John laid the Barrier Treaty before the House of Commons. Lord Townshend, for negotiating it, was voted an enemy of his country. As by this treaty the Dutch were made guarantees of the Protestant succession, Bothmar, the envoy of the Elector of Hanover, had his suspicions awakened. He wrote a letter of remonstrance to the Secretary, expressing his hope that due precautions would be taken on the subject. The Secretary replied, with great spirit, that the House of Commons had a right to inquire into everything supposed to be injurious to the nation; that the best guarantee of the Protestant succession consisted in the Queen, the Parliament, and

* For these charges of projected insurrection and assassination against Marlborough and Eugene, see Swift's History of the Four Last Years of the Queen; Torcy's Mémoires, ii. 139; Bol. Corr., i. 387, and note.

the people; and that he could not understand how an examination of the Barrier Treaty, which deeply affected the commercial interests of England, could give any cause of jealousy to the House of Hanover.*

But while to the Hanoverian minister the Secretary was assuming so high a tone with regard to the powers of the House of Commons, in that House itself, to refractory Whig members who presumed to question the wisdom of the course the Government was pursuing, St. John spoke in a tone which would have better become a minister of Queen Elizabeth or of Henry VIII. than of one who held the seals of office according to the constitutional settlement of the Revolution under King William. The spring advanced, and the summer was coming on; the time for the commencement of the campaign had arrived; but Parliament was told nothing of the prospects of peace. On a motion for the adjournment of the House, Mr. Hampden, the member for Buckinghamshire, and the lineal descendant of the celebrated leader of the Long Parliament, complained that the campaign was inactive, and that the negotiations stood still. "We are," he said, "amused by our ministers at home, and tricked by our enemies abroad." St. John rose with great indignation expressed in his countenance. "I have," he observed, "too great a share in the management of affairs not to resent such insinuations. They reflect highly on her Majesty and her Majesty's ministers. Members have been committed to the Tower for less offences; but though the honourable gentleman may be desirous of that honour, the House may be of another opinion." Sir Richard Onslow warmly de-

* Bothmar's Letter and St. John's Reply in French will be found in the Bol. Corr., i. 401–403.

fended Hampden, and, in answer to the Secretary's threats, moved that, to suppose her Majesty or her ministers had any influence on the deliberations of the House, was injurious to the Queen and a violation of the privileges of the Commons. Onslow's resolution was seconded by Lechmere. Hampden was, however, in some danger, as the Secretary had intimated, of being actually sent to bear Walpole company in the Tower, had not some of St. John's more moderate supporters interfered, and remarked that the commitment of the member at such a time would doubtless be considered by him rather a subject of pride than of mortification.*

But though the ministers could as yet give Parliament no positive assurances about the peace, this did not prevent St. John from proposing and carrying elaborate parliamentary censures against the allies of England. In the spirit of Swift's recent pamphlet, resolution after resolution was passed blaming the Dutch and the Emperor for not having fulfilled all the obligations they had contracted as members of the Grand Alliance. These complaints were all carefully set forth in a long Representation, the joint work of Swift, St. John, and Sir Thomas Hanmer; and being laid at the foot of the throne, and published in every newspaper, it gave much offence to the Dutch ministers, who put forth a reply to some of the allegations it contained. St. John on his part, though he affected to blame all political correspondence with newspapers, himself on this occasion became a contributor to the Gazette of Amsterdam, and undertook the defence of the Representation. This was surely a strange way for an English Government to carry on negotiations

* Parl. Hist., vi. 1134.

for peace in professed concert with allies. What effect could such proceedings have but to encourage France in her pretensions, and put England at almost irreconcileable enmity between herself and those powers with whom she for ten years had been so closely associated in the war?

It was in direct reversal of all the policy which had been pursued since the Revolution. Instead of looking upon the Dutch republic as an ally that was to be cherished, St. John evidently looked upon Holland as an enemy whose intentions were to be watched, whose aggrandizement was to be opposed, and with whom it was scarcely necessary to keep any terms. After this, it is not surprising to find the ministers as ministers countenancing a direct attack on the memory of King William. Another Bill, on that old subject of discord the resumption of the late king's grants of land, was, with the Secretary's support, carried through the House of Commons; but, by the strenuous exertions of the great Whig peers, who most justly argued, that if royal grants were to be inquired into at all, then the exorbitant grants of Charles II. to his favourites were no more worthy of respect than those of King William, the measure was at last defeated. St. John felt that his conduct on this question was of very doubtful interpretation, especially by some whose rights were affected by the Bill. One of these was the brilliant and wayward Earl of Peterborough, who was still looked upon as one of the supporters of the Government, whom it was necessary to keep in good humour, and who, restless, eager, and full of activity, by no means approved of all that the ministers were doing to bring about the peace. The Secretary informed Peterborough, that, with the exception of Lord Port-

land, whose estate was directly struck at, the possessors would have been let off very easily, and that, in particular, Peterborough's interests would have been taken care of by his friends.* But when such resumptions are once begun, it is difficult to say where they may end; and certainly a resumption which was only to be partial and exceptional, which was to affect the enemies of the ministry and glance harmlessly over their friends, would have been the most unjust and flagrant of all.

These proceedings in Parliament show clearly the spirit which was presiding over the negotiations for peace. After the debate of the day was over, the Secretary's duties at his desk began. Though the conferences had been formally opened at Utrecht in January, it was at London and at Paris that the negotiations were really carried on. The Earl of Strafford, the English ambassador of the Hague, was a proud, haughty, and punctilious nobleman, and Dr. Robinson, Bishop of Bristol, and Lord Privy Seal, had had a long experience in the diplomacy of the Northern Courts of Europe. These were the two English plenipotentiaries at Utrecht. But though the Earl of Strafford enjoyed St. John's friendship, had some share in his confidence, and had positively refused to be associated in the negotiations with another plenipotentiary of such mean birth as Prior; and though the appointment of the Bishop of Bristol was supposed to raise the dignity of churchmen, and was considered by Swift, who doubtless thought that he, too, in spite of his black gown and cassock, might also some day be a plenipotentiary and an ambassador, as a very handsome thing done on the part of

* Letter to the Earl of Peterborough, May 27, 1712.

the Lord Treasurer; yet the real business of the negotiations was still, in fact, transacted between St. John and Torcy, through the agency of the humble French priest, the Abbé Gaultier, who flitted to and fro between London, Versailles, and Utrecht as the circumstances of the moment required. Where the abbé was everything appeared to go well; when he was absent everything stood still. This fat monk was called by St. John his Mercury, and by Torcy the Angel of Peace.*

No sooner had the high Plenipotentiaries met and exchanged their credentials at Utrecht, than they appeared to have assembled to do nothing. The English negotiators were not so much to blame for the delay. On the great question relating to the Spanish succession they were without instructions; and Strafford himself, though a Tory, was in close correspondence with the Princess Sophia,† and suspicious of not being thoroughly trusted by St. John. He followed literally the instructions he received; but he was careful to do nothing without instructions. Two of the French ministers, the Marquis de Huxelles and Mesnager, were still prepossessed in favour of Holland; but the other, the Abbé de Polignac, who resented the treatment he had received at the conferences of Gertruydenberg, as Torcy, the French Secretary of State, did the treatment he had also suffered from the Dutch at the conferences of the Hague, was strongly inclined to England. The rivalries and jealousies to which diplomatists, quite as much as the rest of human beings, are subject, had considerable influence. The wish of the French Secretary of State and his master, was, that a private but intimate concert should be established be-

* Bol. Corr., i. 466. Torcy's Mémoires, ii. 148.

† Hanover Papers, *passim*.

tween the ministers of England and France; for they knew well that the closer the union of England with her old enemy, the more complete must be her separation from her old allies. But the plan of peace which the Marquis de Huxelles laid on the table, and which had some months before been previously communicated to the English ministers, was now published in the newspapers; and the pretensions of France appeared so offensive in this memorial, that it awoke universal indignation in England and among both parties in Parliament.*

This did not promise well. Just at the time a signal dispensation of Providence still further increased the difficulties with which the negotiators at Utrecht, and particularly St. John as the Secretary of State at Whitehall, anxious for peace, had yet to struggle. Last year the dauphin died. His son, the Duke of Burgundy, who had been declared dauphin, suddenly followed him, this February, to the tomb; and his eldest boy, who, on the death of his father, had also just been called the dauphin, was three weeks afterwards borne to the same grave. Between the inheritance of Philip of Anjou, the King of Spain, to the throne of France after the death of Louis XIV., there now remained only a sickly infant of two years of age. Thus, as at the beginning of this great question of the Spanish succession, when the Elector of Bavaria died and confounded all the wise provisions of King William and the first partition treaty, was the foresight of politicians rebuked by the striking uncertainty of human life. They were even to be rebuked still further. This sickly child of two years of age lived to be Louis XV.; but nearly all

* Parl. Hist., vi. 1108. St. John's Letter to the Lords Privy Seal and Strafford, Feb. 16, 1711.

men then considered the likelihood of his death, and of his uncle Philip being called to the throne of France, as almost certain eventualities against which it was necessary that statesmen should most deliberately provide.

The question of the Spanish succession then pressed upon St. John with tenfold force. Whatever might be his wishes he had no excuse for leaving it open. If he were to escape impeachment for negotiating the peace, it would at least be necessary to show that due precautions had been taken to prevent France and Spain from coming under the rule of one sovereign. This question was of such importance that St. John himself meditated going over to France at once, and personally coming to some arrangement with the French Government. But for an English Secretary of State in a time of war, and with no certain prospects of peace in view, to take the extreme step of repairing to the enemy's court without even consulting the allies, was regarded by his colleagues as too bold and hazardous a proceeding.* Thomas Harley, the cousin-german of the prime minister, was sent off to Utrecht, and Gaultier, at the same time, despatched to Versailles with a memorial containing the demands of England. The last article of this paper comprised the point on which, for their own security, St. John and his colleagues had determined to make the whole negotiation depend. Philip was to renounce for himself and his descendants all right to inherit the French throne, and the renunciation was to be ratified by the Cortes of Castile, and of Arragon, and the States-General of France. Torcy's letter in reply, with the memorial he enclosed in answer

* St. John's Letter to the Earl of Strafford, Feb. 19, 1712, and his Letter to the Lord Plenipotentiaries, Feb. 23, 1712.

to that which Gaultier had delivered, are extremely curious documents. The French minister told St. John frankly, that, while the union of France and Spain might be pernicious to both countries, the expedient the English Government proposed to prevent such a contingency would be quite invalid, and that to trust to it would be to build upon sand. The memorial contained an uncompromising assertion of the divine right of the House of Bourbon to the Crown of France sufficient to appal, not only an English Whig of the school of Somers, but even a Tory such as St. John professed to be. It affirmed, that, according to the fundamental laws of the realm, the prince who stood nearest the crown by birth was necessarily the heir. This was a fundamental law which the king himself, the absolute master in other respects, could not alter. On the death of one sovereign another at once succeeded without asking the consent of anybody: he succeeded as the head of the kingdom of which the lordship belonged to him by the right of birth alone. He received the crown, not by the will of his predecessor, nor by any edict, nor by any decree, nor by the generosity of any person. He derived it solely from the law which was the work of Him alone who established monarchies, and who alone could abolish that law. Even though Philip himself was to renounce the throne of his ancestors, the case would not in the least be altered. No renunciation could take away what God himself had given.*

This was sufficiently plain speaking. To English ears these doctrines sound more fanatical than any advanced by Filmer, or countenanced by James I. Hobbes himself, the most strictly logical and re-

* Résponse au Mémoire apporté par le Sieur Gaultier, le $\frac{23}{12}$ Mars, 1712.

morseless of the advocates of despotism, in subjecting all laws, morals, and religion to the will of the sovereign, at least affirmed, as the basis of his system, that this will was paramount. On this point alone, however, it appeared that a King of France was powerless. He could not abdicate for himself; neither could he and the next heir, with the sanction of the parliament and states of the kingdom together, alter the right of succession. In justice to Torcy, it must be allowed that these extravagant doctrines were not adopted to suit a purpose by the Secretary of State; nor were they extreme assertions of an uninterested courtier eager to uphold Louis XIV.'s majesty, or dazzled by its splendour. They were, in fact, the deliberate opinions of the ablest French lawyers; and the memorial in which they were contained was, on this subject, a literal paraphrase of the sentiments expressed by a celebrated French magistrate, Jerome Bignon.

St. John, however, was not inclined to abandon the expedient he had proposed. The English doctrine and the French doctrine on the right of kings appeared to stand in direct antagonism in the correspondence of the two ministers. "We are willing to believe," replied St. John, "that you in France are persuaded that God alone can abolish the law on which the right of your succession is founded; but you will permit us in England to be also convinced that a prince may give up his right by a voluntary cession, and that he in favour of whom this renunciation is made may be justly supported in his pretensions by the powers who become guarantees of the treaty."* Philip had, during the last year, provided that, if he should inherit the crown of France, the throne of Spain should be filled by his

* Lettre à Monsieur de Torcy, ce 23e Mars, N. S., 1712.—Bol. Corr., i. 439.

brother. Torcy proposed that in the treaty of peace this disposition should be confirmed; but the idea was scouted by St. John. It showed in itself, he said, the absolute necessity of making no peace which should not clearly comprehend a renunciation of the Spanish throne. After many letters had passed, it appeared to be the fixed determination of the Secretary and his colleagues to agree to no arrangement which should leave the choice of Philip to remain open till the time when the throne of France might be actually vacant; for with all their professions of confidence in Louis XIV., the English Ministers felt that if Philip were actually reigning monarch of Spain when called to be King of France, he would prefer uniting both crowns in his own person to giving up one, even to a brother or any near relative of his own house.

The renunciation, and nothing but the renunciation, it seemed, would satisfy the English Government. Torcy was eloquent on the wisdom of second ideas; St. John preferred his first. For weeks the negotiation was suspended, while Louis was consulting Philip, on whose decision, of course, any arrangement was supposed finally to depend. At last, however, the English Secretary of State himself made another proposal, apparently so advantageous to France that he for some time was confident it would be adopted. He offered, that if Philip would at once give up the crown of Spain to Victor Amadeus, the Duke of Savoy, he should be made king of Sicily and Naples, and also possess the states of the Duke of Savoy, and the duchies of Montferrat and Mantua; and that in the event of his succeeding to the French crown, all these dominions, with the exception of Sicily, which was to revert to the House of Austria, should be finally

united to France. This was a tempting bait. In the contingency which was then contemplated as all but inevitable, even by Louis himself, the pallor of death seeming already settled on the face of the child that alone stood on the old king's death * between Philip and his ancestral throne, France must have had her dominions extended further than she could have ever hoped by the most successful wars. She must have been mistress of Italy; she must have preponderated in the Mediterranean. Louis himself wrote in the most affectionate terms to Philip, advising him to accept the proposal. Philip, however, after taking time for consideration and receiving the sacrament, preferred remaining where he was. As King of Spain he declared himself ready to make the renunciation, which he previously well knew from the envoy of his grandfather to be, according to the laws of France, totally invalid. This was what the English Secretary of State required; he insisted upon it, though he had been told plainly that it was not binding; and since he professed to be satisfied with it, it was, after all, his own affair. Such was the determination of Philip after previously communicating with the Higher Powers.†

Before the news of the King of Spain's decision was received, Torcy wrote, that, with or without Philip's consent, Louis would certainly accept one of the two proposals. Since, then, every real obstacle to peace was

* Louis the Fourteenth's own words on this question in a letter to Philip are: "Si cette enfant vient à mourir comme sa complexion foible ne donne que trop sujet de le croire, vous recueillerez ma succession suivant l'ordre de votre naissance."

† Of the advice which Philip really followed Torcy significantly observes: "Ce conseil étoit celui de conserver la possession actuelle de l'Espagne et des Indes, et d'accorder à la opiniâtreté des Anglais de renoncer à la succession incertaine de la couronne de France, condition ils se contentoient, persuadés qu'ils sauroient bien en assurer l'effet."—Mémoires, ii. 155.

removed, would not England at once agree to a suspension of arms? The spring was far advanced, the campaign was about to open, it was necessary to decide at once as to what was to be done.

The Duke of Ormond had been sent to command the English forces in Flanders. He had succeeded Wharton as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, was a decided Tory, and might now be considered something more. His military achievements had scarcely been those of a captain who was deemed capable of succeeding Marlborough, and of acting on equal terms with Eugene. His friends boasted of his illustrious descent, his devoted loyalty, and the sweetness and affability of his disposition; but they could not but admit that his life had not been exempt from the licentiousness of the age, that he was very vain, that his temper was far too easy, and that he was generally induced to follow the advice of persons, and especially women, whose sense was much inferior to his own. He had been wounded and taken prisoner at Landen. His greatest exploit, however, though its praises were sung in Latin verse by Addison, could scarcely increase the reputation of any warrior. He commanded the English troops in that unfortunate expedition to Cadiz which terminated in the capture and burning of the Spanish galleons at Vigo, where, as General Stanhope said, the English fleet acquired much plunder and much infamy. St. John and Ormond had long been on friendly though not confidential terms, but their friendship, like other intimacies which the Secretary formed and maintained for many years, was at last to be dissolved.*

* For the character of the Duke of Ormond see Swift's Enquiry into the Behaviour of the Queen's Last Ministry; Journal to Stella, *passim*; Stanhope Correspondence; and the Letter to Sir W. Windham, *passim*.

To the Duke of Ormond, as the English commander in the Netherlands, St. John wrote, on the 10th of May, one of the most extraordinary letters that any Secretary of State ever addressed to a British general. No suspension of arms was yet settled. Philip's answer to the last proposal of the British Government had not arrived. The English army was in the field with the allies when the Secretary of State, in the name of her Majesty, positively commanded the Duke on no account either to enter upon a siege or to hazard a battle; and his Grace was even told to keep the order a secret from the allied generals, and to find some pretence or excuse for not complying with what was understood to be Prince Eugene's desire. This command, which was perhaps the most weighty of all the accusations against the Secretary, was couched in the following terms: "Her Majesty, my Lord, has reason to believe that we shall come to an agreement on the great article of the union of the two monarchies as soon as a courier, sent from Versailles to Madrid, can return; it is therefore the Queen's positive command to your Grace, that you avoid engaging in any siege or hazarding a battle till you have further orders from her Majesty. I am, at the same time, directed to let your Grace know that the Queen would have you disguise the receipt of this order; and that her Majesty thinks that you cannot want pretences for conducting yourself so as to answer her ends, without owning that which might at present have an ill effect if it was publicly known." "To disguise the receipt of this order," "her Majesty thinks you cannot want pretences:" these were strange words to be used, in the name of his sovereign, by a Secretary of State as the official organ of a nation priding itself on its good

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faith. To make the matter still worse, this order which was to be so cunningly concealed from the allies, was immediately communicated by St. John himself to the enemy. The Secretary added in a postscript, and as a matter not worth mentioning: "I had almost forgot to tell your Grace that communication is given of this order to the Court of France." It seems scarcely credible, and yet it is now acknowledged to be the truth, that this order, which virtually, on the part of England, put an end to the war, was designedly concealed by the Secretary from most of his colleagues, and that no Council was held upon it at all.*

This was wading in deep water. In the event of any change in his political fortunes the Secretary was incurring a very heavy responsibility. For one moment visions of a future impeachment, and even of exile, seemed to flit before St. John's mind; but as he thought of the strength of the Tories in Court and Parliament, and sanguinely believed that after the peace the influence of the party would become greater than ever, these forebodings of evil were dismissed from his thoughts as most improbable and absurd. Thus may some very remarkable expressions in a letter written about this time from St. John to the Earl of Peterborough be construed. "As to my conduct in the negotiations for peace," the Secretary remarked, "I shall want no justification. I have, it is true, acted as boldly in the promoting that good work as your lordship used to do, when you thought the interest of your country at stake; and I tell you, without any gasconade, that I had rather be banished for my whole life because I have helped to make the peace, than be raised to the highest honours

* See Bol. Corr., i. 500, and note; the Report of the Committee of Secrecy; and the Earl of Oxford's Answer to this article of his Impeachment.

for having contributed to obstruct it; however, God be praised! we run no risk of the kind."

It was according to St. John's nature, that, once being thoroughly engaged in the work of peace, he should only become the more zealous for this cause. His temper became heated by opposition; the greater the obstacles that were thrown in his path, the more his ardour and determination to surmount them increased. His disposition was essentially combative; he fought for victory, and spurned the very idea of defeat. To all who stood in his way he soon entertained feelings of personal animosity. For the allies who at this time were not prepared to adopt the course he proposed, and whose prejudices and interests were against the peace as it was negotiated, he could find no words strong enough to characterize his dislike and contempt. Polignac wrote shortly afterwards to Torcy from Utrecht: "We cut the same figure that the Hollanders did at Gertruydenberg, and they cut ours. The tables are completely turned." It was natural that the Dutch, without any corresponding cause given by themselves, should feel painfully this reverse of circumstances. But St. John had worked himself up into a positive rage against Holland, and for the republic which had been so long and so gloriously allied with England he at last felt nothing but the most bitter hatred.

It is curious to follow the progress of this animosity. At first the Secretary had proposed that the negotiations should pass through the hands of the Dutch statesmen. In adopting the suggestions of France, that they should be conducted by England, he had solemnly pledged himself at the same time not to agree to any treaty without the Dutch. He had afterwards insisted that the French Government should enter into

no correspondence with Holland, and particularly requested that Mesnager's instructions might be limited to England alone. When the conferences at Utrecht were opened, though St. John professed himself desirous of terminating hostilities, he firmly declared that England would make no peace without her allies; but that if they still persisted in rejecting the terms proposed, though she would still faithfully adhere to them and carry on the war, she would take care to limit her expenses in men and treasure to what she could proportionately bear. As these conferences went on, the Secretary, however, began to affirm, that if France only gave satisfaction about the renunciations, England would make peace with or even without the Dutch. But now, in the last stage of all, he abandoned all professions of acting in concert with the allies, and in his private correspondence expressed his hopes that the Dutch would be obstinate and hold out, as it would be more advantageous to England to sign a separate peace. On the very day when he sent off the order to the Duke of Ormond, not to act against France, St. John wrote to Thomas Harley, the Lord Treasurer's relative at the Hague, a letter full of invective against the republic of Holland. "I confess," he said, "I begin to wish that the Dutch may continue obstinate, rather than submit to the Queen's measures, since we do not want them either to make or support the peace, and since it will be better settled for England without their concurrence than with it."*

This state of things could not continue. According to the spirit in which the negotiations were conducted an open breach between England and the allies was inevitable. Prince Eugene declared his resolution of

* Letter to Mr. Harley, May 10, 1712.

attacking the French army, and of course invited the English commander to take his part in the operations. The Duke of Ormond was at length obliged positively to decline acting offensively against the enemy; and in answer to the indignant complaints of the Dutch, the Bishop of Bristol, the plenipotentiary at the Hague, stated openly that his sovereign considered herself released from all obligations to the republic and the allies, and would make a peace to suit her own interests alone. These declarations of the bishop, being afterwards constituted one of the articles of Oxford's impeachment, he denied all knowledge of such instructions ever having been given by the English Secretary of State. It is certain, however, that the very words which the bishop used at the Hague coincide almost literally with some expressions of St. John in a previous letter to the Lord Treasurer's kinsman, Mr. Harley, and they might be regarded in themselves an instruction to the British diplomatist to make the declaration which astounded all Europe. "On the report," wrote the Secretary from Whitehall, "which my Lord Strafford, who arrived here the day before yesterday, has made by word of mouth, as well as upon the contents of the latter despatches from Utrecht, her Majesty is fully determined to let all negotiations sleep in Holland; since they have neither sense, nor gratitude, nor spirit enough to make a suitable return to the offers lately sent by the Queen, and communicated by the plenipotentiaries, her Majesty will look upon herself as under no obligation towards them, but proceed to make the peace either with or without them."* The tenor of all St. John's correspon-

* Letter of May $\frac{17}{28}$, 1712. See also the paper giving an account of the Conferences about the Duke of Ormond not attacking the enemy. — Bol. Corr., i. 513.

dence at that time was in the style of the right reverend plenipotentiary's declaration; nor when the Secretary was challenged by the Whigs in the parliament at the time, did he in any respect deny that such instructions had been given.

The outcry of the Whigs was powerless to impede the course of the Government. The wavering of the earlier portion of the session was at an end, and in both Houses St. John was sure of his majority. As soon as the despatch announcing the readiness of Philip to make the renunciation was received, the Secretary hastened to pledge the Queen by a declaration in Parliament to the terms of peace. Her Majesty came down to the House of Peers, and in a speech from the throne informed the Lords and Commons of the renunciations which were to be made, the advantages that were to be conceded to England, and the conditions which France was ready to grant to the allies. The Queen admitted that everything was not yet arranged; but declared plainly that a satisfactory basis for a peace had been laid down, and expressed confidently her hopes that the negotiations would soon be brought to a happy conclusion. Addresses of thanks in conformity with the terms of the royal speech were carried in both Houses. The Secretary and his friends were triumphant. After so long buffeting with the storms of political controversy and diplomatic negotiations, the haven of peace to which St. John had been directing all his efforts seemed on the point of being reached at last.

Yet this peace was still certainly not sought by the Secretary in the spirit of peace. The session was about to end, and with the session was to terminate St. John's political career in the House of Commons; but he persisted in his favourite system of inflicting parliamentary

censures on the allies, and all who presumed to question the wisdom of his policy. The States-General, in a pathetic letter to Queen Anne, complained of the manner in which they had been deserted by England; and this letter, which was in part a remonstrance, having been published in the newspapers, nothing would satisfy the Secretary but the formal condemnation of it by a solemn resolution in the House of Commons, and an address to the throne. Under his instigation, the same punishment was at the same time inflicted on individuals and foreign powers, on a bishop as well as on their High Mightinesses, the States-General. Dr. William Fleetwood, the Bishop of St. Asaph, published a volume of four sermons with a preface, which was supposed to reflect on the manner in which the ministers had conducted the negotiations. Although there was really nothing in the bishop's preface but what any candid political opponent might justifiably say, it was also formally condemned by the House of Commons as malicious and factious, and ordered to be burnt by the hangman in Palace Yard.*

No minister since the Revolution ever showed so much impatience of public criticism as St. John. The slightest reflection on his political conduct was sure to call forth his severest indignation. Just as, during the last autumn, he had fourteen printers and publishers at the bar under his warrant as Secretary of State, he had in the course of the session brought down a message from the Crown complaining of the licentiousness of the press; and one of his latest ministerial acts in the House of Commons was to carry through the famous Stamp Act which existed to our time, and has only recently been repealed. It was expressly introduced by him to

* See Parl. Hist., vi. 1151.

restrain the liberty of the press, and to check political discussion. By one blow it was expected that Grub Street would be destroyed. The Medley, the Examiner, and many other publications of different and indifferent merit, sank under it; but the Spectator, which was doing more unmixed good to England than any periodical that had ever yet appeared, or than all the statesmanship of St. John, still managed to struggle on at a double price under the weight which had so insidiously been placed upon it by the Government. The party purposes for which the Stamp Act was framed, were, however, by no means answered. As Swift confesses, the Tory publications suffered more than the Whig; and, indeed, the literature of Toryism, under equal conditions, never enjoyed that extent of popular patronage which was lavished on the more democratic prints of all sizes and degrees. Many years after this time, the country squire devoted to the Church, contented himself with the well-thumbed Dyer's Letter; but the Whigs and Dissenters living principally in the towns read printed sheets, and therefore bought them; and, as a natural consequence, these publications flourished.

After the Queen had given her consent to this measure against the press, and several others awaiting her sanction, Parliament was adjourned by a speech from the throne, on the 21st of June; but the Houses were not finally prorogued until the 8th of July. This unusual course of proceeding gave rise to some conjectures, one of which was not very favourable to St. John. It was said that Walpole being still confined in the Tower, could only be released when the Parliament was finally prorogued for the session; and that the adjournment was adopted for a fortnight

longer than it would otherwise have been, that his imprisonment might be continued. The effect of this adjournment undoubtedly was, that Walpole spent a few days more in the Tower; but the alleged motive, as a mere supposition, may be charitably disallowed. The two rivals were no more to sit face to face on opposite benches. By withdrawing from the House of Commons, St. John left the supremacy in the popular assembly open to his political enemy; and Walpole, whose ascendancy in his party had increased by the persecution he had undergone, was fully capable of profiting by this great opportunity.

CHAPTER IX.

1712—1713.

THE NEW PEER.

When St. John left the House in which he had so rapidly risen to political eminence, he was undoubtedly the greatest commoner in England. Of all contemporary politicians, his career had hitherto been the most prosperous; and his fortunes appeared to the shrewdest observer those with which it would be the most prudent to be associated. Swift, little dreaming of what a disastrous eclipse would follow the Secretary's unclouded splendour, told him frankly that he was the statesman whose future could most confidently be trusted; and what the doctor said personally to St. John, he also remarked to the most confidential of his own correspondents. "The Secretary," wrote Swift to Stella, only in the preceding February, "turns the whole Parliament, who can do nothing without him; and if he lives and has his health, will, I believe, be one day at the head of affairs. I have told him sometimes that if I were a dozen years younger, I would cultivate his favour, and trust my fortune with his."* This was St. John's position

* Journal to Stella, Feb. 23, 1711-12.

in the summer of the year 1712; and this was the position that he eagerly abandoned for a coronet.

A lord was a lord in those days more than in ours, and a lord the Secretary was anxious to be. For a politician of any high class, much less for a great statesman, this readiness to accept a peerage showed but a poor appreciation of his own situation, and the spirit of his age. It is evident that the truth had not yet dawned upon St. John, who was most concerned in recognizing it, that the House of Commons had become the supreme power in the state, that the leadership of that House ought to be the first object of an aspiring statesman's ambition, and that the man who could acquire and retain the confidence of that House must necessarily be the first man in England. In the prime of manhood, at thirty-four years of age, St. John found himself in possession of this great talisman; and, like a spoiled child, unacquainted with its virtues, he rashly threw it away for the sake of the glittering but worthless bauble with which his eyes were dazzled. Never was there a more complete misapprehension of the circumstances of his time made by an English statesman. What St. John thoughtlessly relinquished, his rival, Walpole, seized and firmly retained. Many of St. John's subsequent misfortunes arose from this ill-advised acceptance of a coronet. It was as a peer that he was afterwards placed in his enemy's power, and permanently shut out from the legislature. As a commoner, he might again have taken his place on the benches of the Opposition, and once more confronted his adversary on equal terms. But the peerage was accepted; and Henry St. John disappeared from that great popular assembly over whose deliberations he was every day acquiring a

more decided influence, and where, as an orator, at a time when eloquence was becoming almost everything, he had, and could have had, no rival.

Such an ascent could scarcely be called an elevation. It was made much less so, in his own opinion, by the grudging manner in which the honour was conferred. The promise made to him at the beginning of the session was, that he should not lose rank by the creation of the new peers. As during the last year the earldom of Bolingbroke, belonging to the elder branch of his family, had expired, St. John construed this promise to mean that it should be revived in his own person. He was only, however, made Viscount Bolingbroke and Baron St. John; and this grant of the lower step in the peerage instead of the higher one, awoke his keenest indignation. Besides, Harley having been made an earl, St. John thought that he had a claim to an equal advancement. In writing immediately afterwards to Lord Strafford, who had gone to Utrecht, the new peer observed, in answer to his friend's letter of congratulation: "It would ill become the friendship I profess to you, if I did not naturally own what passes in my soul upon this subject, and confess to you, what I will do to no one else, that my promotion was a mortification to me. In the House of Commons I may say that I was at the head of business, and I must have continued so whether I had been in court or out of court. There was, therefore, nothing to flatter my ambition in removing me from thence, but giving me the title which had been many years in my family, and which reverted to the Crown about a year ago, by the death of the last of the elder house. To make me a peer was no great compliment when so many others were forced to be

made to gain a strength in Parliament; and yet further her Majesty would not go without a force, which never shall be used by me. I own to you that I felt more indignation than ever in my life I had done; and the only consideration which kept me from running to extremities was that which should have inclined somebody to use me better."*

Bolingbroke's feelings on this subject were doubtless acute; but on looking at the question impartially, there scarcely appears in it to be much of which he could reasonably complain. He does not himself allege that any express promise was violated; and the construction about the reversionary earldom was one which he put upon it himself, but which certainly admitted of another interpretation. He was promised that if he would remain in the House of Commons to the end of the session, he should not lose his rank; nor did he lose his rank. A viscount might be a lower degree than an earl; but a baron was certainly lower than a viscount. If he were ambitious of these aristocratic honours, they were still within his grasp. He was a young man, powerful in the Government and in the Parliament, with a future before him. He was a viscount to-day, he might be an earl to-morrow; and he might yet die, if he pleased, with the strawberry leaves upon his escutcheon. Nor could it be fairly said that his claims to an earldom were equal to Oxford's. Harley was the prime minister, he had been principally instrumental in the great change which had raised the Tories to power, he had been three times Speaker of the House of Commons, he was comparatively an old man, and had undergone a long par-

* Letter to the Earl of Strafford, July 23, 1712. See also Oxford's Brief Account of Public Affairs.

liamentary service. As a statesman, he was now all that he could ever hope to be. Bolingbroke might yet confidently count upon anything to which he chose to aspire. Though St. John's career in Parliament and in office had been brilliant and arduous, it had not been of such long continuance that the refusal of an earldom could be considered an act of royal ingratitude and neglect. For a young man, it might be fairly thought that he had already been sufficiently paid; he was Secretary of State, he had now a peerage, and was undoubtedly the second man in the Government. The wonder is, not that he was made a viscount instead of an earl, but that, at his time of life, he should have wished to be made a peer at all. For a great statesman, priding himself on his genius and philosophy, this was but a paltry ambition. But Henry St. John, now Viscount Bolingbroke, was thoroughly an aristocrat at heart: the pursuit of this visionary earldom he continued throughout all political vicissitudes, and to attain it he employed many hours of his latest years in the Court of Frederick Prince of Wales.

It was not, however, merely the refusal of this higher step in the peerage that caused the anger and discontent of the newly-created viscount. Bolingbroke felt that the Lord Treasurer's influence was still paramount at Court, and that, notwithstanding all his own subserviency to Lady Masham and her brother in the matter of the twenty-six thousand pounds granted for the expedition to Quebec, he, the Secretary of State, whose exertions to bring about the peace had been so indefatigable, was still only regarded as a useful tool. This was, indeed, the case. Whatever might have been Bolingbroke's success as a politician when he was first enrolled among the English nobility, he had not yet prospered

in his career as a courtier. At home and abroad, at the court of Hanover and among the Jacobite emissaries, his position in the Government was considered very unstable. It was still said, that as his colleagues could not speak or write French with fluency, and as the thread of the negotiations was in his hands, it was necessary to tolerate the Secretary until the peace was signed, but that as soon as the work was accomplished, he would be summarily dismissed.* Whatever might be Lady Masham's sentiments, the Queen still looked coldly upon him. Even at the moment when she placed the coronet upon his brow, he was given, by the refusal of the earldom, significantly to understand that the honours of the Crown were still at Oxford's disposal, and that thus far, and no farther, was the Secretary to be permitted to rise. It was the consciousness of this fact which, when he knelt at her Majesty's feet, and kissed her royal hand, for his new honours, caused Bolingbroke's breast to heave and his eye to sparkle with indignation. What was given only made him feel more indignant at what had been withheld. He once more thought of resigning his seals of office: wiser councils, however, which he thought the dictates of patriotism, at last prevailed. But the fire burnt all the more fiercely internally because the outward signs were suppressed. All that he had suffered, or imagined that he had suffered, at the hands of the prime minister, wrought painfully within him; and henceforth, as Bolingbroke himself afterwards declared, he "fully renounced in his heart all friendship for Oxford."†

But as Oxford had had a glowing preamble of his merits affixed to his patent of peerage, the Secretary thought that he might also have prepared a similar eulo-

* See the Stuart Papers; Macpherson, ii. 532. † Letter to Sir W. Windham.

gium. He asked Swift to draw it up; but the divine, who never wanted prudence in his dealings with the two jealous statesmen, earnestly begged to be excused. "I felt," he afterwards remarked, "that such a work might lose me a great deal of reputation, and get me very little." Before the Secretary had, however, finally decided on his title, Swift advised him to take that of Pomfret. It sounded well; it was known in history; there was such a place as Pomfret Castle. But Pomfret being situated in Yorkshire, and the Secretary having no estate there, and besides being doubtful whether that title was not already in another family, he wisely took one which had already been known to the house of St. John; and the title of Bolingbroke was, through his own genius, to become quite as famous in history as that of Pomfret.*

Just as the Secretary's patent of peerage was passing through the office, and he was in a kind of chrysalis state between a lord and a commoner, some important transactions were being settled on which the peace finally depended. As soon as the consent of Philip to the renunciations had been obtained, the most formidable obstacle was removed from that suspension of arms which the French ministers had been so eager to bring about. To this result one important condition was attached. Dunkirk, as a pledge of security, was to be delivered up to England until the peace. The moment Marshal Villars on the part of France informed the Duke of Ormond that his master was ready to agree to this proposal, a cessation of arms for the space of two months, and capable of further extension, was to be declared between the two armies. But a new difficulty occurred. The suspension was to extend to all the troops

* See Swift's Journal, July 1 and 17, 1712.

in the pay of England; but it soon appeared that the duke could not count upon the obedience of the foreign battalions whose expenses were defrayed by the British Government. The Secretary intimated that neither the arrears nor any further pay should be given by England to those foreign troops who would not in this emergency obey her general. On this point the King of France was not disposed to haggle, and again signified his willingness to put England in possession of Dunkirk. Ormond drew off with twenty thousand men from the allied army, and on some hindrances being made to his march through the towns in the possession of the Dutch, turned round suddenly and seized upon Ghent. It seemed doubtful whether the cessation of arms with France might not lead, on the part of England, to a collision with those allies with whom her native troops had so long emulously marched side by side, and under the leadership of Marlborough so many times shown the way to victory.

Under these circumstances, to weaken the Duke of Ormond's army, as had been originally intended by sending a detachment from it to take possession of Dunkirk, was thought a hazardous proceeding. It was determined to embark troops direct from England; and the British admiral, Sir John Leake, was ordered to be in readiness with his squadron in the Downs. Leake was a distinguished naval officer, who had taken a principal part in the maritime expeditions that had been carried on in the course of a war in which the navy had only played a secondary and a somewhat inglorious part. Sir John was a Whig, and had been, as was considered, too closely connected with the Godolphin administration; but managing to make his peace with the ruling powers, he was still allowed to hoist his flag. His

original letters and papers in the manuscript department of the British Museum contain three unpublished letters from the Secretary of State, just as he was being raised to the peerage. They have the last of the signatures, H. St. John; and all relate to this pacific but most important expedition to Dunkirk. The first is as follows:—

"Whitehall, July 1, 1712.

"SIR,

"Your letter of the twenty-eighth of June from Deal, and that of the thirtieth from the Downes, are both come to my hands. I have very little to trouble you with in answer to them, her Majesty having directed the Lords of the Admiralty to prepare you such instructions as are necessary for your conduct in the expedition on which you are going. You will likewise receive from their Lordships an answer to your proposal of proceeding with your squadron to Margate Road in order to meet the yachts and transports.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"H. ST. JOHN."*

The next letter refers to the commander of the military portion of the expedition. This was no less a person than Lady Masham's brother, the redoubted Jack Hill, whom the Secretary delighted to honour, notwithstanding that his successes had not been quite so splendid as his opportunities. Though generally blamed for his miscarriage in the expedition to Canada, his sister's influence prevented him from suffering under any disgrace. He was chosen to command the six regiments which were to embark in this

* Additional MSS., 5443.

service. It was one of great honour and no little delicacy, as the Secretary of State implies; but happily it was one of little danger, and required but little military capacity. Even among the ministers there were persons who doubted whether France really would give such a proof of her confidence in the English Government as to put this great fortified town into their hands. Might she not still be playing false? Might not her game to the last be to sow dissension between England and Holland, and induce the Dutch to throw themselves unconditionally on her mercy? Even sagacious political observers had their doubts and suspicions. This was the question which Brigadier Hill was to be sent to solve. Dunkirk was, if promises were to be depended on, to be placed without a murmur under his authority. Marlborough, it is true, had taken towns from the French in another manner; but if Jack could not rival his former patron in one way he might in another. At all events he was kept prominently before the public in an important situation; and this alone has not unfrequently been supposed to constitute merit. Good credulous people outside of the great official world often judge of the capacity of a person for office by the offices he has contrived to fill.

Some such thoughts as these were perhaps in the Secretary's mind when he had Hill appointed, and penned this letter to the admiral in the Downs:—

"Whitehall, July the 5th, 1712.

"Sir,

"Coll. Kane brings you this. He is sent away almost as soon as we receive the express from Col. King, to take care that Mr. Hill, who will be with you to-morrow night, may, on his arrival at Deal or Margate, have nothing to do but to go on board. Your

assistance to him will not be wanting, I am sure, nor anything else which is in your power to advance a service of great honour as well as real advantage to our Queen and country. Inclosed you will find a translation of the points agreed upon between the French officers and those sent by her Majesty, for your part of this expedition, though I suppose Mr. King may have already given you the same communication. I transmit likewise a secret instruction which the Queen has thought fit to sign, and which it is her intention should be punctually observed. I need not tell you how desirous her Majesty is that this whole affair, which has been transacted hitherto upon honour between the French and us, should be finished with the best grace on the Queen's part. I most heartily congratulate with you, wish you good success, and am,

"Sir,

"Your obedient, humble servant,

"H. ST. JOHN.*

"Sir J. Leake."

The next letter, written the day afterwards, introduces Hill in person to the admiral. It also shows that notwithstanding France was, as the Secretary said, upon honour, that doubts were still entertained of her good faith, and that it was thought necessary, as a measure of precaution, to strengthen the English garrison by all the marines that could be spared from the fleet.

"Whitehall, July the 6th, 1712.

"SIR,

"This letter will be delivered to you by Mr. Hill, as I hope that which I writt last night to you has been before now by Mr. Kane. The Queen, in consideration of the hard duty which so small a body of troops,

* Additional MSS., 5443.

in so large a town, and so many forts must be exposed to, thinks fit, not only that the six hundred marines should be detained on shore, but likewise that you should reinforce them, with as many more as you can possibly spare out of every ship in your squadron. This may the more conveniently be done since care will very soon be taken to relieve all the marines, and restore them to the sea service.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"H. St. John."*

The Secretary's epistle was forwarded to the admiral in another from Hill himself. The brigadier's composition is a literary curiosity. Though the Secretary's enclosed letter was still signed H. St. John, Jack writes of his friend as "My Lord Bullingbroke," the orthography of titles at the moment of their creation being somewhat uncertain. Jack also confessed that he was "out of order," probably from the effects of the last night's drinking bout with the Secretary and some jovial friends, who, before his departure, had quaffed to the success of his expedition bumpers after bumpers of champagne.

"Sir,

"I am just this moment come and have been very much out of order before I came out of town, and therefore design to go on board the yatch to refresh myself, or would have come on board you myself; Coll. King, who brings you this, tells me that he thinks *is* going before may make our landing more expeditious. I hope you will order him what ship or yatch you shall

* Additional MSS., 5443.

think necessary. The enclosed letter is from my *Lord Bullingbroke*, desiring you would spare as many marines as possible, which at present will be absolutely necessary, the place being so large and our troops so few.

"Sir,

"Your most obedient, humble servant,

"J. Hill.

"Deal, July the 7th, 1712."*

The progress of this bloodless expedition was satisfactory. All that the French had promised they punctually performed. It was with a feeling of relief that Bolingbroke first learnt on Tuesday, the 10th of July, from a letter of Sir John Leake to Mr. Bromley, then at the Admiralty, and a messenger from Hill himself, that the British troops and marines were peaceably in possession of the town and forts of Dunkirk. Hill's honours increased; he became military governor of the place. Jack, in his elevated position, grew quite a polite and considerate personage, paying his friends in England delicate attentions by sending them little presents from Dunkirk. Lady Masham received from him a pattern head-dress, and Swift a handsome gold snuff-box, with a goose engraved on the bottom. Only once did Governor Hill give the ministers some anxiety. When the Duke of Ormond was expected to retire with the English troops from Ghent to Dunkirk, Bolingbroke became fearful that the new governor, pluming himself on his own merits and favour, might not receive the noble general with the respect due to his rank. The Secretary wrote earnestly to Hill, to neglect no courtesy which he could pay to the duke; and to consider that a man of his exalted position, who, under such circumstances, came with some eighteen or

* Additional MSS., 5443.

twenty thousand men from the head of a great army and the presence of the enemy could not be in the best of humours.*

Bolingbroke was himself, as we know, at this time not in the best of humours. His disappointment about the earldom, and the slight which he considered Oxford and the Queen to have put upon him, still vexed his restless and irritable mind. But he continued to attend to the business of his office with all his characteristic assiduity, neglecting no matters high or low. While he was corresponding voluminously with the French minister Torcy and the English plenipotentiaries about the weighty matters of peace and war, the barrier for the Dutch, and the renunciations to be made by Philip of Spain, and the members of the French royal family, in the manuscripts presented by Sir William Musgrave to the British Museum, Bolingbroke's name, with the signature and date carefully written by his own hands, may be also seen appended to a messenger's bill for one pound, eleven shillings, and sixpence, after it had been carefully certified by one official and duly examined by another, the clerk of the cheques.

In the Musgrave collection some of Bolingbroke's messengers' bills have been preserved and may still be read in the original documents. While he was Secretary of State, these officials were fully employed. His favourite messenger was one Richard Sharman; and this man's approach was then looked upon with terror by Whig printers and publishers. From one of Sharman's bills at this time, drawn up, as was the

* See Swift's Letter to Hill, of Aug. 12, 1712; the Journal to Stella, of July 17 and Sept. 18, 1712; Additional MSS., 5443; and Bolingbroke's Letter to Hill, of July 12, 1712, in Corr., i. 564.

custom, just like a lawyer's bill of costs, an extract may be given as an illustration of the official charges and customs of Queen Anne's reign :—

	£.	s.	d.
"13th of July, 1712.—Commanded by your lordship's warrant to take into custody Mary and Elizabeth Evans, and for keeping them in custody with diet and lodging from July 13th to July 15th inclusive, being three days . . .	2	0	0
"For extraordinary expenses for a constable and assistance in searching to apprehend the said Mary and Elizabeth Evans, and bringing them down to the office to be examined	0	5	0
"14th July.—Ordered by your lordship's office to take two women and a man along with me to search for the widow Bird. Expended in several places to find out the said widow Bird, and bring her to your lordship's office to be examined *	0	5	0"

A long series of items might be given. But these may be enough to indicate the workings of the office, with Bolingbroke's warrants and messengers. Widow Bird's search and apprehension, it appears, cost the State five shillings. All such items were minutely detailed and examined, in order to be allowed or disallowed by the Secretary of State.

Bolingbroke, in the third week of August, was for a few days taken out of his ordinary official routine, with all its petty details, and summoned to play the

* Musgrave's Collection of MSS., 5756.

Minister of State in a grand style, and on a splendid stage. After the temporary suspension of arms between France and England in Flanders had been proclaimed, and the English put in possession of Dunkirk, many things remained still to be settled. If Bolingbroke's own wishes had been followed a separate peace between France and England would have been at once concluded. He cared nothing for the outcry of the Dutch and the rest of the allies, and would have gladly seen his own country break off from the great confederacy without the slightest regard to their pretensions or interests. This was the advice he gave the Queen; it was characteristic of the man, and the part he was now seeking to perform.*

But Oxford's scruples prevented the English Government from adopting such a course. He knew that the steps already taken to bring about the peace had been highly disapproved at Hanover; and that if England were at once to throw all her existing alliances to the winds, and again to act, as in the days of Charles and James, in strict concert with France alone, it must sunder at once, and for ever, all ties between the English Government and the House of Brunswick. In fact, such a system of policy, to have any intelligible result, meant, and could only mean, the restoration of the House of Stuart. But Oxford, with all the Puritan leaven in his blood, and timid, cautious, temporizing, and procrastinating by nature, could not bring his mind to contemplate such a contingency as at all

* "Bolingbroke," writes Torcy, "avoit conseillé à la Reine sa maîtresse de préférer un paix particulière à la suspension d'armes, et d'assurer au plus tôt à ses sujets la jouissance de toutes les conditions dont le Roi étoit convenu en faveur de l'Angleterre. . . Le conseil donné par Bolingbroke fut contredit par le grand trésorier trop attentif à menager le duc d'Hanovre, et craignant sa vengeance lorsqu'il seroit assit sur le trône d'Angleterre."—Mémoires, ii. 302.

THE PEOPLE'S PALACE
Beaumont

desirable. Indeed, whatever may have been the wishes of many of his political associates, and some of the eminent members of the Tory party, no minister that ever held office since the Revolution, had, in his heart, less inclination to the Jacobite cause than Oxford. He was perplexed, and at a loss what to do; but he still looked anxiously to Hanover. Bolingbroke, it is true, openly professed to take the same view; but with much grumbling, because the Elector did not abandon the Whigs, and adopt all the prejudices of the ministers: instead of the Tories courting the House of Hanover, he seemed to think that it was the duty of the House of Hanover to court the Tories. Already to Thomas Harley, who had gone from Utrecht to Hanover, the Secretary had made the significant observation: "We ought to be better or worse with the court of Hanover than we are."* Oxford was by no means prepared to do anything that would make him worse with the Elector; and their opposite sentiments on the question conspired with their other political rivalries, jealousies, and mutual distrust, to maintain that state of alienation which the refusal of Bolingbroke's earldom had effectually produced between the two ministers.

As a means of putting Bolingbroke again into a good humour, it was determined to send him personally on a mission to France. To visit the court of Versailles, as an English Secretary of State, had for some months been one of his desires; but though he had, in February, been prevented by his colleagues from carrying this intention into effect, it was thought that the same objections to the proposed journey no longer existed after the suspension of arms in Flanders, and

* Letter to Mr. Harley, June 7, 1712.—Corr., i. 533.

the surrender of Dunkirk. The different pretensions of the Prince of Bavaria, and Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy, the exact form of the renunciations to be made by Philip and the French princes, and the terms of the general suspension of arms, all required to be determined. Already they had given rise to long letters between Torcy and Bolingbroke, when the English Secretary of State, somewhat to the surprise of his correspondent, announced that he intended crossing the Channel in person, and bringing over with him a draft of the suspension.

The Secretary, conducting with him Gaultier and Prior, arrived safely at Calais. After spending a night in the old town, and sending off a letter to his colleague, the Earl of Dartmouth, Bolingbroke drove forward to Paris. He did all he could on the journey to keep his visit a secret by stopping as little as possible for refreshment and only in the smaller places, and by endeavouring to conceal his name. But the news of his arrival spread everywhere as he approached, and everywhere he was received with enthusiastic demonstrations of respect and welcome. He was looked upon as the herald of peace. France was suffering severely from the war; and he was considered the man who was to put an end to her sufferings. The people thronged round his chaise, kissed the horses, and almost threw themselves under the wheels. After a kind of royal progress he at last reached the French capital as tired, he said, with compliments as with the fatigue of the journey. These compliments he decorously thought fit to ascribe to the Queen; but they were really intended for himself.*

No sooner had Bolingbroke's feet touched the ground

* Letter to Lord Dartmouth, Aug. 21, N. S. 1712.

than he was met by a gentleman with the carriage of Madame de Croissi, Torcy's aunt, who invited him to supper, and informed him that her nephew was travelling post to meet him from Fontainebleau. He accepted the invitation, and was received with the utmost kindness and hospitality. Torcy soon afterwards arrived. During his stay in Paris, Bolingbroke was induced to make Madame de Croissi's hotel his home. The situation of the two Ministers was in some respects similar. They both had their enemies at court; they both hated the Dutch; they were both blamed for trusting too much to each other; it was the anxious desire of them both to bring about a peace between their two countries as speedily as possible. This mutual interest in the success of the negotiations lent extraordinary warmth and pleasantry to their intercourse. In a few hours Bolingbroke found himself fairly domesticated with the Torcys, who, the aunt, mother, and sisters, all lived under the same roof. They began to call the Secretary and his friend, Prior, by their Christian names. Madame la Marquise afterwards caused much merriment in the little circle, by speaking of Bolingbroke as her son, and transforming his familiar English name of "Harry" into a French "Harré." Prior also participated in the agreeable intercourse. He was called Matthieu; and he taught the Torcys to drink the health of the absent Lord Treasurer as Robin. But the Secretary, the handsome, pleasant, and accomplished Harré, was the especial favourite. His praises were on the tongues of the whole household of the Torcys; he won all their hearts.

With negotiators so pleased with each other as Torcy and Bolingbroke there could not be much fear of a mis-

understanding. Two days sufficed for them to come to an agreement on most important points yet remaining in dispute between their Governments. It was agreed that Victor Amadeus was to have Sicily, and that his right to succeed to the crown of Spain after Philip and his heirs should be acknowledged in the acts in which the inheritance of the Bourbons was settled. A draught of Philip's renunciation was afterwards made by the two ministers. Their warmest discussion, however, occurred on the satisfaction to be given to the favoured ally of Louis XIV., the Elector of Bavaria, who, as soon as he heard of Bolingbroke's arrival in Paris, came into the neighbourhood to advocate his own pretensions.

In the course of their conferences it became of some importance for the French minister to discover the extent of Bolingbroke's powers. Knowing the English Secretary's weakness, Torcy employed for this purpose an intriguing but fascinating Frenchwoman, then residing occasionally with her married sister, Madame de Ferriole, but still better known under her own name of de Tencin. She was well fitted for the task set her by de Torcy: she and her brother, the Abbé de Tencin, being afterwards employed on other occasions, years afterwards, in opening and resealing the letters of Roman prelates, in order to betray their secrets to the French ministers of the day, and the lady being thorough mistress of that bad art. At this time Madame de Tencin had already given sufficient occasion for scandal, though she might be considered only to have started on that career of shameless infamy which she afterwards ran. She had been a nun, had fled from the convent, and protested against her vows. She settled in Paris with her brother, the Abbé, who was one of the most

wicked and abandoned of those wicked and abandoned French priests of which the last century afforded so many examples. The brother and sister worked assiduously together in all the mines of intrigue and profligacy. They certainly formed a worthy pair: the Abbé afterwards being found guilty of simony by his own handwriting, at the moment when he was about to declare his innocence on oath; and Madame subsequently also exposing her illegitimate child to perish on the steps of a church one cold November morning. This child, however, became an immortal testimony to the mother's heartlessness; having been found and brought up by a poor glazier's widow, it lived to be the celebrated D'Alembert. Another lover of Madame de Tencin afterwards killed himself in her house, and left a letter accusing her of every crime.* She was, indeed, even in her vices and errors, a kind of female Rousseau, without that nobler light of genius which has dazzled the admirers, and even the enemies, of the eloquent Genevese.

These things were as yet in the future. When Madame de Tencin was introduced to Bolingbroke she was about thirty years of age, witty, handsome, high-spirited, somewhat bold, and with large, languishing, dark eyes. The susceptible Secretary was in a moment subdued. He declared himself her admirer; and he also addressed her sister, Madame de Ferriole, in a very passionate strain. Savoy being then held by French troops, Louis had presented the Abbé de Tencin with an abbey called the Abbey of Abundance, in that mountainous district. At the peace, however, Savoy was again to be restored to its rightful owner, Victor Amadeus, and of course the gift which had been bestowed

* See the Lettres de Lord Vicomte Bolingbroke, iii. 288.

by the King of France was likely to be revoked. Madame de Tencin and her sister, Madame de Ferriole, besought Bolingbroke's influence with the Duke of Savoy. The Secretary promised to do all he could to confirm this worthless priest in possession of what he had acquired; and Victor Amadeus soon afterwards yielded to the representations of the English statesman.*

On the Saturday after his arrival, Bolingbroke was conveyed by de Torcy to Fontainebleau, where the King of France then resided. An apartment was assigned the English statesman in that part of the palace called the Conciergerie; and nothing was neglected to do him honour. The next morning he had an interview with Louis, who received him most graciously. The old king was fast declining to the tomb; he was but the shadow of his former self; but still in his age, and amid the misfortunes which his vanity and ambition had brought upon his kingdom, he preserved all that august dignity with which he had for so many years filled the French throne. It was impossible to look without emotion on that splendid phantom of royalty, which had seemed so magnificent, had shone so long, had at last suffered so cruel an eclipse, and was on the eve of departing for ever. Louis expressed his desire for peace, and his respect for Queen Anne; but his articulation, perhaps from the effects of old age, was rapid and indistinct, and Bolingbroke could not catch every word that fell from the king's lips. Later on the

* For Bolingbroke's intimacy with the family of the Tencins see his own letters of Nov. 11, 1712, and Jan. 7, 1713; see also his letter to the Duke of Savoy, thanking him for conferring the gift of the Abbey of Abundance, on Dec. 4, 1712; see also Coxe's Walpole, i. 197; and for this lady's intimacy with Bolingbroke see also the Lettres de Lord Vicomte Bolingbroke, Paris, 1808, iii. 285, in which some very satirical verses are quoted about Madame de Tencin's conquests over princes and statesmen, including Bolingbroke.

same day the French and English Secretaries of State read over together the draught of a convention, which they had previously prepared, for a suspension of arms for four months between England, France, and Spain. This convention was then signed, and the war was, in fact, at an end.

Bolingbroke returned to Paris, and spent a day or two more in the brilliant capital, which had for him at this time many fascinations. He was the lion of the hour. Crowds followed him wherever he went. To be invited to an assembly in which he was expected to be present was considered a privilege. His gracious reception by the King was well known; and the fashionable world was ready enough to honour any one whom Louis condescended to honour. But Bolingbroke, it was said, deserved to be glorified on his own account; his grace, his wit, his beauty, his genius, his virtues, were declared to merit the enthusiastic homage of the Parisians.* When he entered the theatre, as Corneille's fine tragedy, the Cyd, was being represented, the whole house rose to receive him, and the performance was interrupted that the audience might give their illustrious visitor the most public manifestation of their respect. Such a demonstration might have turned any head; Bolingbroke was sufficiently assailable on the side of vanity. His visit to France certainly did not make him, as an English statesman, more attached to the constitutional liberties of his country. He saw himself honoured by a despotic monarch, and the idol of a despotic court; and he was not disinclined to set about deserving their praises by listening to designs which were in the highest degree perilous both to himself and to the dearest interests of

* Mémoires du Marquis de Torcy, ii. 210.

the country he represented. It was many a day since an English Secretary of State had been on such intimate terms with the Court of France. The Pretender, if not actually a resident in Paris during Bolingbroke's stay, was certainly in the immediate neighbourhood. That Bolingbroke had actually, as has been alleged on the authority of some documents, said to have been discovered in the French archives by Sir James Mackintosh,* two secret interviews with this unfortunate son of James II. may, notwithstanding this statement, very well be questioned. That if such interviews did take place, they could only be for purposes the most hostile to the succession of the House of Hanover, and must have been, under any circumstances, a gross breach both of duty and decency on the part of an English minister, cannot at all be a matter of question. That Bolingbroke and the Catholic Pretender to the British crown were actually under the same roof at the Opera, and in the sight of all the Parisian audience, sat witnessing the same performance, was certainly no mere calumny subsequently invented, as his first biographer asserts,† by the statesman's enemies. It was a fact. Contemporary evidence shows clearly that the circumstance actually occurred. It gave rise to much speculation, and awoke the most sanguine hopes in those who were favourable to the Jacobite cause.‡

* See Edinburgh Review for Oct., 1835.

† Memoirs of Bolingbroke, 1754, p. 240.

‡ Nairne to Abram, Aug. 28, 1712:—"I told him the king was as civil to Gendron [probably Prior] as he could; and I asked him if he had any credit with Honiton [Harley]. I told him the king had seen Mr. St. John at the Opera." Nairne to Berry, Sept. 1, 1712:—"Amongst other news from France we are told that Lord Bolingbroke happened to be at the Opera with the Chevalier de St. George, where they could not but see one another; so I should be glad to know what my lord says of that knight, and whether the likes him; for they tell me he is a tall, proper, well-shaped young gentleman, that he has an air of greatness mixed with mildness and goodnature, and that

Bolingbroke departed from Paris, leaving behind him, as Torcy afterwards wrote in a strain of gallantry not often found in a diplomatic correspondence, all the ladies in despair. Nothing was talked about but the visit, and the pleasant associations which it had bequeathed to the Torcy family and the fashionable world of Paris. Bolingbroke left a large bag of money for Madame la Croissi's servants; but the marchioness, with a delicacy which it would have been as well if English noblemen at that time had imitated, returned it to Prior, and would not allow them to receive anything from her illustrious guest. The Secretary also left a handsome sum for the players; but this also there was some difficulty in getting accepted. He was, however, afterwards thanked for his bounty by the performers, who had played the Cyd and other leading parts. Madame la Croissi herself sent Bolingbroke a handsome snuff-box, simple in outward appearance, but beautifully inlaid with gold; and Madame de Tencin also sent over some truffles by the Duke of Argyle, which Bolingbroke gave the Queen, and which her Majesty ate heartily, and only regretted that they were not "marbré." Bolingbroke was, on his part, equally attentive to his new friends in Paris. Every member

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his countenance is not spoiled with the small-pox; but, on the contrary, that he looks now more manly than he did, and is really healthier than he was before; and they say he goes to Chalons."—Original Stuart Papers; Macpherson, ii. 338, 339. The argument that the Pretender and Bolingbroke could not have been at the Opera on the same evening, because Bolingbroke's box must have been provided by the Court, scarcely deserves notice; and the assertion that the officers of the royal household would have taken care to avoid giving any offence to the English Government is a poor hypothesis. Louis could easily have pleaded that he was not in this respect master of the Chevalier's movements. Bolingbroke himself acknowledged to Swift that he had seen the Pretender at the Opera. "He protested to me that he never saw him but once; and that was at a great distance in public, at the Opera." Swift to Archbishop King, Dec. 16, 1716.

of the Torcy family he endeavoured to assist by all the means in his power. To Madame la Marquise herself, indeed, he could do little, but send a large quantity of honey-water, Barbadoes water, and sack. But there were others, particularly the Duke of St. Pierre, Torcy's brother-in-law, to whom, as to the brother of Madame de Tencin, Bolingbroke's official position enabled him to render much more substantial and valuable services.

This was the bright side of the visit to Paris; but it had another aspect not quite so pleasing. His assiduous attentions to Lady Masham and all the members of her family were never for a moment relaxed. On his journey back to England he took Dunkirk by the way, and called on his friend the Governor Hill, whom in conversation the Secretary addressed as Jack, and in his private letters as dear John. Accompanied by the French officer who was still in charge of the ordnance and magazines, Bolingbroke surveyed the works, which, according to the terms of the treaty he was negotiating, were to be destroyed; and it was pointed out to him, that if the demands of England were in this respect literally carried out, not only would the sluices for defensive purposes be demolished, but also those used for the necessities of irrigation, and that, in consequence, the surrounding country would be laid under water. The Secretary promised to modify the terms respecting this demolition, and he parted from the French Intendant, the Chevalier de Mole, and his lady, with expressions of the most unbounded regard.*

But on arriving in England he found the scene changed. His own goodhumour was restored, and Mrs.

* See Bolingbroke's Letter to the Chevalier de Mole, Nov. 14, 1712.

Masham herself was all smiles; but some other great persons with whom he was associated in the Court and Government, did not receive him with the most pleasant faces. He caught an epidemic fever, and went down into the country for the benefit of his health. On returning to Whitehall, he learnt that there was to be some alteration made in the business of his office. Hitherto, though really belonging to Lord Dartmouth's department, the correspondence with France had been principally carried on by Bolingbroke. It was now intimated as her Majesty's desire that for the future that portion of a Secretary of State's duties was to revert to Lord Dartmouth. The reason of this change was not given; but it was not difficult to be understood. Some of Bolingbroke's proceedings abroad had been contemplated with displeasure, both by the Lord Treasurer and the queen. There were many flying rumours in circulation. The private relations which Bolingbroke had established in France were the cause of much distrust; and much more was suspected than was actually known. Oxford was jealous by nature: he thought that the Secretary of State was acting for himself; and had designs altogether independent of the Prime Minister and his colleagues.*

Bolingbroke acquiesced in the arrangement, and put the best face he could upon the matter. But it occasioned much surprise among his most intimate friends. Torcy and Prior were both astonished and indignant. They felt the change more painfully because they were both in positions of some embarrassment, and depended greatly on Bolingbroke's influence in the Government. The enemies of the French minister still pretended

* See Oxford's Brief Account, in which he expressly states Bolingbroke's conduct in France was at this time considered highly objectionable.

that England was insincere in making peace, and that after France had put her old enemy in possession of Dunkirk, she might yet be made the dupe of this misplaced confidence. It was Torcy's interest that nothing should happen on the part of England to encourage such mistrust. Just, however, as everything seemed happily settled, and himself and Bolingbroke had made the personal acquaintance of each other, and formed a private friendship, the official correspondence with France was put into other hands. Even a credulous man might have had his suspicions. What could this mean? Did it not indicate that some of Bolingbroke's colleagues were dissatisfied with what he had done, and were inclined to take precautions against the brilliant Secretary?*

Prior's situation was as delicate as that of the French minister. He was quite as much annoyed at what had so unexpectedly occurred. He had been left by Bolingbroke in France as a kind of British plenipotentiary; but it was not easy to say exactly what he really was. As he said himself, "I have neither powers, commission, title, instructions, appointments, or secretary." Such a position was one both of difficulty and danger, and required that the most unreserved confidence should exist between him and the Secretary of State with whom he corresponded. When Bolingbroke directed the negotiations all was well; Matt. and Henry, as they called each other, were intimate friends, and even in their official despatches they found it impossible to put on the airs of the ambassador and the Secretary of State. But Lord Dartmouth was a proud, grave, and reserved nobleman, who looked with disdain on all sallies of wit, and the eccentricities of genius;

* See Torcy's Letter to Bolingbroke, Sept. 27, N. S. 1712.

he would not ask Swift to dinner,* and he cared nothing for Prior's verses. Bolingbroke and Prior had many sympathies in common. Bolingbroke, indeed, was a man of rank, and sufficiently sensible of his worldly position; and Prior's birth was very obscure; but Prior had risen to eminence both in business and the world of letters, before the voice of St. John had been heard in the House of Commons; and the important embassies in which Prior had been concerned in a degree equalized the intimacy of the poet and the statesman. The irregularities of their private life also corresponded. Swift, with all his grossness, was obliged to keep up some appearance of restraint, even in his interviews with the Secretary; but Prior and Bolingbroke could, in their convivial hours, drink another bottle, and joke about a mistress without any breach of clerical decorum. Their letters bore the impress of their habits. Both their official and private communications were singularly frank and lively, full of fun, scandal, and anecdote, now and then not a little indelicate, and so free in their private details, that the editor of Bolingbroke's correspondence in 1798, felt himself called upon to take the questionable liberty of omitting certain passages.† Bolingbroke affected to feel the stings of jealousy. Sir Thomas Hanmer went over to Paris, and the Secretary asked this Tory country gentleman to tell him all he could about his friend's private life; and, in evident allusion to Madame de Tencin, requested Sir Thomas particularly to inquire whether Prior had not abandoned his nut-brown maid and taken up with the

* "I can't get a dinner out of Lord Dartmouth."—Swift to Stella, August, 1712.

† See Note to the Bol. Corr., ii. 94.

eloped nun? Prior, though a man of wit and gallantry, had a peculiarly sad expression of countenance; and Torcy and Bolingbroke, when their correspondence was resumed, found time, in the hurry of business, to make many humorous allusions to their friend Matthew's sombre visage, which looked habitually as mournful as an undertaker's at a funeral.

Prior's first duty, on being left in Paris by Bolingbroke, was to exchange the ratifications of the suspension of arms. This was very soon satisfactorily accomplished. He had also to look after the departure of the Pretender, with whom he was suspected of being in secret communication; and who, at this time, left for Chalon upon the Maine. "The young gentleman," wrote Prior to Bolingbroke, "is very melancholy, but much resigned." Prior made to Bolingbroke, in characters, another private communication, which, as it relates to the Queen's passports that were openly sold in the Secretary of State's office, and clearly shows that there was something not only informal in the business, but also to be ashamed of, may be best given in the friendly plenipotentiary's own words:—

"MATT. TO HENRY.

"Believe how truly I love you; and think it my friendship that I tell you. Going to Chanille this afternoon, Monsieur de Torcy and Madame, and Monsieur Dalincourt, Secretary to the Admiralty, in the coach, Monsieur de Torcy read, and gave us to read, the Dutch Gazetteer; and, upon a passage in one, asked me if it were true that at the Secretary's office passports were sold for six pounds each? You will think the confusion I was in, and the manner in which I turned it off, which I will write to you *en droiture*, not being able in

the meantime to conceal anything from you where I think your honour concerned. Make what use you please of this. Adieu!

"I am, very truly,
"My dear Lord,
"Yours."*

In an official letter immediately afterwards, Prior added a private postscript, with another allusion to the same delicate subject. "I am sure you are not angry with me for what I wrote to you in characters. You can't think how people talk of it here; I deny it still, as to your part, and will do so to the death." Very soon after this was written, Prior was sent over to England, with the consent of France to the cession of Tournay, and to smooth some other difficulties which had arisen among the plenipotentiaries at Utrecht. He pledged himself to the French minister, that if peace were not made, after what France had surrendered, he would return and allow himself to be hanged. This promise is pleasantly alluded to in Torcy's letters; but Bolingbroke abstained from making any remarks on the matter of the passports which had excited so much surprise in the mind of the French minister. It is evident, however, that the indiscriminate sale of the Queen's passes to a country with which, though there was a suspension of arms, England was still nominally at war, was considered a very extraordinary proceeding. The fees on the passes to Holland, or wherever her protection extended, formed no inconsiderable portion of the Secretary of State's gains; and it appears, from a memorandum made at the time, that Bolingbroke had in one year cleared from this resource no

* Corr., ii. 81.

less than three thousand seven hundred and nineteen pounds.

He was in no condition to despise these emoluments. Notwithstanding his wife's fortune, the property of his family, and his regular official salary, his means were still straitened. Very recently he had lost, by the failure of a merchant whom he trusted, four thousand pounds; and he told his friend, Lord Strafford, that he had never had in hand at once fifteen hundred pounds in his life.* As an English peer he was in no condition to live without office. After having once enjoyed them, the pomp, state, and riches of a great ministerial situation had become necessaries; and he was eager to render his tenure of office less precarious than he well knew it to be. This fact accounts, on his part, for many proceedings which otherwise would seem inexplicable.

The jealousy between the Secretary of State and the Lord Treasurer still continued. The stock of goodhumour which Bolingbroke brought back from France was very soon exhausted; indeed, the manner in which the correspondence had been transferred to Lord Dartmouth might have soured a much meeker statesman; and during the autumn of 1712 the dissensions in the Government were growing stronger than ever. Swift was again obliged to assume his unthankful office of mediator between Bolingbroke and Oxford; but their differences had taken deep root, and could not be removed. Oxford already saw that the Secretary was gaining ground with Lady Masham, and to gain ground with Lady Masham was eventually to gain ground with the Queen.

In the heat of this dissension her Majesty again

* Letter to the Earl of Strafford, April 8, 1712.

became ill. She took a fit of ague and fever, and the physicians were sent for in great haste. The alarm which this sudden indisposition produced among the courtiers and ministers ought to have once more warned both the jealous statesmen of what they might expect on the not very unlikely event of the Queen's sudden decease. That power which they were so ready to quarrel about was held by the frailest tenure ; in a day all their machinations might be scattered to the winds : a jealous and watchful enemy was at the gates.

Such considerations, however, were without avail to induce the Lord Treasurer and the Secretary of State to lay aside their mutual enmity at the prospect of their common danger. Their struggle for place was, indeed, increased by their sense of the insecurity with which it was held. It was necessary to lose no time. Neither side was disposed to make allowances or concessions to the other. Just at this season Godolphin died. His Order of the Garter, and several others which had also reverted to the crown, were at the disposal of the Prime Minister. Bolingbroke was passed over. The neglect to confer upon him this bit of ribbon caused his passions again to boil, just as they had done when he found he was to be made a viscount instead of an earl. He was furious, and would listen to nothing but his indignation. Though it was necessary that some very important business should be settled, the Secretary went down to Bucklersbury, and remained at his country seat in seclusion for a fortnight, nursing his rage against Oxford. Again Swift had to interfere to bring about a reconciliation ; but, after using all his efforts, he confessed that the quarrel could only be patched up.*

It was necessary for some degree of unanimity to be

* Journal to Stella, Oct. 11 and 28, 1712. Letter to Sir W. Windham.

restored between these discordant colleagues, in order that the great business of the peace might be brought to an end. The state of the Queen's health, and the safety of the ministers imperiously called upon them to put the last hand to the great work. Bolingbroke's journey to France appears rather to have impeded than to have facilitated the negotiations. The Dutch had previously been beaten at Douay. The allies suffered other reverses by the reduction of Douay, Quesnoy, and Bouchain; and through a quarrel between the lackeys of Rechtheren, one of the Dutch deputies, and Mesnager, the French plenipotentiary, the conferences at Utrecht had been entirely suspended. The English Secretary of State had, indeed, left France full of zeal to conclude the negotiations he had so long carried on, and giving the most positive assurance of his wishes to see a separate peace signed between England and France. There was, he said, only one contingency to be dreaded. If the Dutch were to abandon their opposition, and throw themselves into the hands of England, public opinion would compel the Queen's ministers to take up their cause, and advocate their pretensions against France.* To gain time to carry the renunciations into effect, and to keep up the differences with the Dutch, until all was arranged between France and England, became the objects of French diplomacy. The miserable quarrel between the lackeys of Rechtheren and Mesnager was designedly magnified by Louis, as Torcy ingenuously confesses, into a serious breach of international decorum. Towards Holland the French king spoke in all the lofty style of his former days, and pretended to insist on the recall of Rechtheren, and the nomination of another deputy, as the only compensation becoming his

* See Mémoires du Marquis de Torcy, ii. 214.

royal dignity. Oxford, however, and other members of the British Government, disapproving of the complete concert which had been established between Torcy and Bolingbroke, were not inclined to see the French game played out; and Torcy was significantly told that his master was assuming too high a tone, and going a little too far. Prior's return to England, with the consent of Louis to give up Tournay, removed one great difficulty to the success of the negotiations. It was, however, a concession made exclusively to England, and, though adding another town to the Dutch barrier, with no wish on the part of France that it might render the Dutch more inclined to agree to the peace. Another delay unexpectedly occurred by the tragical death of the Duke of Hamilton, who was killed on the morning of the 15th of November in a duel with Lord Mohun, just before his Grace was about to depart as English ambassador to the Court of France. This great nobleman's death was deeply regretted by Bolingbroke. The sad event was supposed to be not only another hindrance to the peace, but a grievous blow to the Jacobite cause.*

Both the principals in this terrible duel expired on the ground where they fought. General Macartney, however, who had been Mohun's second, and was alleged to have stabbed the duke as he lay bleeding in mortal agony, fled from justice. Macartney was a Whig: he was one of the officers who had been dismissed from the army for being devoted to Marlborough. The Tories were most eager to see him apprehended and brought to trial for his life. Bolingbroke sent out his messengers with warrants in every direction. Sharman went by the Secretary's orders to

* See Stuart Papers; Macpherson, ii. 364.

Deal and Dover, and scoured the country far and wide. A long bill of the messenger's expenses, for this purpose, drawn up by himself, and addressed to "my Lord Bulingbroke, her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State," may still be read among the manuscript documents of Sir William Musgrave.* Sharman's expenses in this pursuit amounted to fifty-seven pounds nine shillings and twopence halfpenny; and the costs of other messengers employed in the same pursuit were doubtless in the same proportion; but though Bolingbroke assured the Queen that Macartney had been traced to Ipswich, and that the messengers expressed themselves confident of his capture,† the fugitive general at last managed to baffle his pursuers, and escaped to the Continent.

This death of the Duke of Hamilton increased the difficulties of the Government. To appoint a successor was a matter of great delicacy. The brilliant, accomplished, and versatile Duke of Shrewsbury was at length fixed upon; he had performed a great part in the Revolution of 1688, when he was but a youth, and after many shortcomings from natural fickleness, timidity, and irresolution in his manhood, he was yet in his old age to perform a great part in the crisis of the Protestant succession which was fast approaching. During the reign of William, he had for a moment inadvertently lent his ear to some of the Jacobite plotters, but he was in heart and principle firmly attached to the liberties of his country, and had no thought of abandoning the interests of the House of Hanover. He had a great name, and was the King of Hearts still. Whether Shrewsbury's appointment to the Court of France was altogether agreeable to Bolingbroke may be doubted.

* Additional MSS., 5756.

† Letter to the Queen, Nov. 28, 1712.

Though they were apparently upon friendly terms, and the Secretary professed for the duke the highest admiration and respect, Shrewsbury was not disposed to follow implicitly Bolingbroke's leadership, and as, during the first conferences about the peace, when Mensager was in England, he regarded the Secretary's proceedings at this time with dislike and suspicion. It was reported at Hanover that Shrewsbury was sent to France merely to get him out of the way of business.*

The year 1713 had begun before Shrewsbury was ready to cross the Channel. But Prior was, in the meanwhile, again sent over to the French Court, and conducted the negotiations on points which yet remained in dispute between the two Governments. At the beginning of the new year, these subjects of controversy were reduced to two: the claims of France to Newfoundland, and the differences about trade, which were to be settled by the commercial treaty. They were not easily arranged; for in matters respecting trade the French people have always shown a jealousy of England which the most despotic Government cannot afford to disregard. The English, on the other hand, grew impatient at the delay. The usual time for the meeting of Parliament had passed, and nothing as yet appeared done. It was said that the peace was still as far off as ever, and that the ministers were afraid to call the two Houses together. The French Government took advantage of these difficulties of the British cabinet, and, instead of showing a readiness to conclude, began to keep off, and persist in their demands. Even Bolingbroke was disgusted with this conduct in his friends at the French Court, and indulged in language which he had not hitherto used during the progress of

* Hanover Papers; Letter from Robethon to Gatke, March 21, 1713.

the negotiations. "We cannot," he wrote to Prior, on January 19th, 1713, "persuade ourselves here that the French act either fairly or wisely; they seem to press us to conclude that they may have others at their mercy, and at the same time they chicane with us concerning the most essential article of all our treaty, and endeavour to elude an agreement made, repeated, confirmed."*

As the French lost something in Bolingbroke's good graces, the Dutch began to rise in his estimation. The statesmen of Holland at last felt that the best course for them to take was to submit themselves in all things to England; and by yielding to the modifications on which Bolingbroke insisted in the Barrier Treaty, induce the Queen's Government to make better terms for them with France. This alternative was adopted, and the harmony between England and Holland was apparently restored. Even Bolingbroke himself was compelled to admit that with Holland he had at last no cause of complaint. "Indeed, my Lord," he wrote to Lord Strafford, "it is impossible to say enough in commendation of that good conduct which has overcome the obstinacy of the Dutch, and by prevailing upon them to execute the Barrier Treaty, has buried at once all their disputes with the Queen."† This was not, however, exactly what France wanted. England had now no excuse for not making common cause with Holland: the sacrifice of Tournay, in the hope that a separate peace between England and France would be signed, had been made without avail; England seemed once more on good terms with the best of her allies.

The Emperor, however, held out. Parliament had again to be prorogued; and it appeared certain that if

* Corr., ii. 186.

† Letter to the Earl of Strafford, Feb. 3, 1713.

the sittings of the legislature were to be suspended until the House of Austria should be satisfied, the meeting of Lords and Commons must be dispensed with altogether. The Queen's health was still precarious; the season for opening the campaign was coming on; Prince Eugene still endeavoured to induce the Dutch to continue the war. As most of the important points in the negotiations were settled, the more the pertinacity of the diplomatists increased to wrangle over the trifling matters which yet remained in dispute. The despatches on all these various subjects were most voluminous; Bolingbroke's patience was quite exhausted: he was frequently at his desk until three o'clock in the morning.

It was a sign of his increasing influence at Court, that the official correspondence with Shrewsbury and the Court of France, was at this time again resumed by Bolingbroke, after having, in the preceding September, been so suddenly taken out of his hands. The struggle between him and the Lord Treasurer still continued. Twice in the course of three months had Swift again attempted to bring about a better understanding between them; on both occasions his efforts had entirely failed; and he at last abandoned the invidious task as hopeless. Oxford himself felt that he was losing ground. Not in vain, after all, had Bolingbroke paid such assiduous court to Lady Masham. Not in vain had he lavished his patronage and friendship on Jack Hill. Lady Masham was warmly advocating the Secretary's cause against the Treasurer's; and allowing Bolingbroke once more to direct the negotiations with France, was, on the part of Oxford, the admission of a defeat.*

* See the Journal to Stella, Jan. 12, 1712, and Jan. 1, 1713, and Bolingbroke's Letter to Shrewsbury, Jan. 19, 1713.

The Secretary soon afterwards received another proof of his sovereign's growing favour not without its significance. A young man called Thomas Harrison, who had distinguished himself by some agreeable verses, and possessed some lively talents, had for two years been Secretary to the embassy at the Hague. Swift always imagined that he had been the cause of Harrison's appointment, by his recommendation to the Secretary; but family reasons had also their weight, for Bolingbroke directly speaks of Harrison as his relation.* The young man's good fortune did not long continue. He died very suddenly, to the great grief of Swift, who, in his patronizing way, felt poor Harrison's loss acutely. It was necessary to appoint a successor to the secretaryship at the Hague; and Bolingbroke was allowed to fill up the vacancy with his half brother George, and as the Secretary expressly wrote, as a mark of the Queen's approval of his own conduct.

George was the eldest son of his father's second marriage. He was many years younger than Bolingbroke, and when that statesman became Secretary of State, went to study at Utrecht. There he remained for nearly twelve months, and being, as the brother of the prosperous Secretary, surrounded by flatterers and parasites, contracted debts, and committed other imprudences. He fell ill of the small-pox, and was conveyed to Mr. Drummond's house at Amsterdam, where, for some time, he remained between life and death. It is only due to Bolingbroke to say, that amid the hurry of business and pleasure, and while apparently so engrossed in the pursuits of political ambition, he found time to write many kind letters

* Letter to the Earl of Strafford: Corr. i., 68.

to Mr. Drummond about the poor lad, and showed himself most anxious for his recovery and progress in his studies. The debts which George had thoughtlessly incurred, Bolingbroke requested the friendly merchant to pay, and declared that if his father refused to accept the bills that were to be drawn upon him for this purpose, he would himself see that they were punctually met. Sir Harry St. John still sauntered about the clubs and coffee-houses, troubling himself very little about his sons or anything else, chatting about the exploits of Sedley and Rochester in other days, and occasionally making a joke at his eminent son's expense. This was all the notice that the old beau condescended to take of the greatness of his eldest born; but Sir Harry carefully avoided, perhaps from mere indifference, or from old associations, committing himself to Bolingbroke's political machinations, or endorsing his political enmities. Such a father was not likely to assist his younger son forward in the world. This the Secretary appears to have felt. He became himself a father to poor George, who, in the absence of children of Bolingbroke's own, was likely to inherit both the family estates and his honours; and the statesman, with almost parental solicitude, in this the season of his prosperity, did everything he could to promote the young man's interests. When Thomas Harley went, during the last year, from Utrecht to Hanover, he was accompanied by George St. John, whom Bolingbroke warmly recommended to his care. The enemies of Oxford and Bolingbroke, indeed, gave a somewhat ludicrous explanation of this journey. It was said that the rivalry between the Secretary and the Lord Treasurer had become so established and so keen, that a kinsman of the one could

not be trusted on a complimentary visit to the Court of Hanover, without being accompanied by a kinsman of the other; and that as Oxford sent his cousin Thomas, so Bolingbroke, at the same time, took care to send his brother George. Their joint mission, as it was considered, certainly excited much attention among the Jacobites and Hanoverians. George, however, did not stay long at Hanover. At the beginning of this year he had returned to England, and was sent back by Bolingbroke to Utrecht as Secretary to the embassy.

The Secretary managed, about the same time, to do something for his friend Drummond. This Amsterdam merchant had his health drunk as honest John Drummond by the Tories, and he had suffered for his devotion to their cause and the cause of the peace. Commerce and politics do not very easily assort together in the same person. Drummond had become so obnoxious to the Dutch that they had almost ruined him, and he had felt himself obliged to set about winding up his mercantile affairs in Amsterdam. It was of course the duty of his political friends to provide for him; and the task was easier because he had contrived to keep on good terms with both Oxford and Bolingbroke. The Secretary had in view for Drummond, that never-failing resource, a consulship, with an increased salary; and he was also appointed Queen's Commissioner, to regulate matters of British trade in the Flemish towns, which, at the impending peace, would have to change masters. Drummond had been a useful tool both to the Lord Treasurer and the Secretary, and he took care to profit by the advantages they agreed to throw in his way. It appeared afterwards, that in certain pecuniary transactions, which were formed into one of the charges in Oxford's impeachment,

John Drummond was the very efficient agent; and he certainly received for his conduct in the business, which related to the ostensible disposal in his name of some thirteen thousand pounds by the Lord Treasurer's warrant, very much more than a lucrative percentage.*

It was not so easy to accommodate Prior. The poetical plenipotentiary, indeed, endeavoured to keep on good terms both with the Lord Treasurer and the Secretary; but he was not so successful in preserving his friendly neutrality as Drummond. The private correspondence between Matt and Henry did his business. He was soon regarded as devotedly attached to Bolingbroke, and, in consequence, began to lose the favour of Oxford. Having accompanied Bolingbroke to France, and been left there in intimacy with the new acquaintances the Secretary had formed during his visit, Prior was supposed to be Bolingbroke's confidant in schemes which were concealed from Oxford. As Shrewsbury would, as the English ambassador, have to make a public entry into Paris in his official character, Prior thought that, as plenipotentiary, he ought also to have a coach, liveries, and servants, in order to make some display on this state occasion. But on applying to the Government at home for money to defray these expenses, he received an answer from Lord Dartmouth, that he was only to appear in the ambassador's train as a private gentleman, that his plenipotentiary's commission gave him no representative character, and that he might very properly dispense with a coach, liveries, and servants. Prior sent an abstract of this terse reply to Bolingbroke, who expressed great indignation at the manner in which the

* See the second additional article of charges against the Earl of Oxford, and his answer.

poet was treated. He even gave Prior an intimation that something more was going on than perhaps appeared, by advising him to use his credit, and incur any expenses he thought suitable for his appearance at the entry, and assuring him that in time they would be paid by the Government. The Secretary now evidently believed that the day was not very far distant when he would be the undisputed master both of the Court and Treasury.*

Prior and Shrewsbury had at length succeeded in settling the disputed points with France. After having been so long at sea they were at last entering port. Difficulties had arisen about what were in diplomatic language called the bona immobilia which the French were to leave in the territories given up to England. The British Government sought to obtain the release of the unfortunate French Protestants whom the bigotry of Louis XIV. had condemned to the galleys. The ninth article of the treaty of commerce with what were called the four accepted species, was to be explained. The renunciations of the French princes were to be duly registered. Everything, however, at last yielded to the determined perseverance of Bolingbroke and the two English diplomatists by whom his wishes were most ably seconded. It was in February that everything was satisfactorily arranged between Torcy and Shrewsbury, and on the same day the Duke wrote to the plenipotentiaries at Utrecht, ordering them to sign the treaty with France, and any of the allies who might be disposed to follow the example. Bolingbroke transmitted similar letters in the most positive terms from London; but to the last the plenipotentiaries at Utrecht kept up their character for delay.

* Letter to Prior, March 26, 1713.

Bolingbroke still hoped that all the powers would sign, and the peace become general. It soon appeared, however, that this happy result was more than would be attained. The Emperor persisted in refusing to listen to terms, and through the agency of Prince Eugene, endeavoured in Holland to rekindle the flames of animosity against France and the English ministers. A more ludicrous circumstance contributed to prevent Spain from concluding. The Princess de Ursini, who had so long governed the uxorious Philip through his Queen, had been seized with the ambition of becoming an independent sovereign. The Spanish negotiators made all sorts of difficulties, because Louis XIV. and Torcy, however compliant in other respects, were not willing in Flanders to carve out a kingdom for this old woman. Lord Strafford and the Bishop Robinson thought that their powers as plenipotentaries at Utrecht only authorized them to sign the treaty with all the powers; and when it became certain that the Emperor would not come into the settlement at Utrecht, they wrote off to Bolingbroke for an alteration in their credentials. Indeed, through all the negotiations, the English Secretary found that these plenipotentiaries would not advance a step beyond their instructions. What they did, they did by express orders from Whitehall. They knew the dangers with which they were surrounded, and carefully shunned all responsibility. Bolingbroke had always to determine everything, to direct everything, to give written instructions about everything. His hopes and fears respecting the peace were, however, to be set at rest. On the 1st of April, O. S., the treaties were signed between England and France at two o'clock in the afternoon; the ministers of the Duke of Savoy, and the King of Prussia, in the course

of the same evening, set their hands and seals to the parchment; and the Dutch characteristically came in last, signing at midnight. Prior had had the distinction of bringing over the treaty of Ryswick to England. The honour of bringing over the treaty of Utrecht was reserved to Bolingbroke's young brother George, who arrived in London with the precious document about two o'clock in the afternoon of Good Friday, the 3rd of April. The Secretary welcomed his brother with open arms, as, covered with dust, he alighted from his post chaise at Whitehall. All Bolingbroke's cares seemed at an end. He could scarcely believe in the reality of the great treaty that he so eagerly glanced over. The words which came to the mouth of Elizabeth when the news came to Hatfield that her sister Mary was dead, and that she, the persecuted princess, was now the Queen of England, came to Bolingbroke's mind: "It is the Lord's work, and it is marvellous in our eyes."*

The great obstacle to the assembling of Parliament was removed. After so many adjournments, delays, and evil forebodings, the ministers could meet the two Houses with some appearance of success. Bolingbroke would, indeed, be no longer present in the Commons to encourage the Tories, and to show them the game. He was still, however, as eager as ever to make play. His advice was to seek to turn the tables upon the Whigs; and, instead of waiting to be attacked, for the ministerialists themselves to be the assailants. The Tory majority had not diminished during the recess: from deaths and other causes, it might be said, indeed, to have increased; and it seemed that the Whigs could do

* See Parl. Hist., vi. 1170; and Bolingbroke's Letters to the Earl of Strafford, of April 4, 1713, and to the Duke of Shrewsbury, of April 19, 1713.

nothing but show their own impotence. During the debate in the Privy Council on the question of ratifying the treaty, the Whig Chief Justice, Parker, and Lord Cholmondeley, the Treasurer of the Household, ventured to raise objections. Lord Cholmondeley was turned out of office. Whig officers of the army, and Whig lord-lieutenants for counties were also dismissed. Oxford appeared to act at last with something like energy, and to adopt Bolingbroke's favourite plan of making a clean sweep of their political opponents. For the moment it seemed that something like harmony was restored between the two great men.*

The Queen, notwithstanding the alarming rumours that had been prevalent about her health, delivered the royal speech in person. Her voice was weak, but clear and articulate. How could the factious Whigs presume to say that death was impending over this illustrious princess? Her Majesty gave the Tory portion of her subjects the comfortable assurance that the peace was signed, and that in a few days the ratifications would be exchanged. Securities, she also observed, had been taken about the Protestant succession, and between herself and the House of Hanover perfect friendship had been established. The Stamp Act, it appeared, had not been sufficient to check the wantonness of the press; and the Queen called upon the Lords and Commons to provide further remedies for this great abuse. She also lamented the impious practice of duelling, which in the case of the Duke of Hamilton and Lord Mohun had been attended with such fatal results; and concluded with exhorting her subjects, since they were about to enter into the enjoyment of peace abroad, to cultivate among themselves peace at home.

* Journal to Stella, April 8, 1713.

But there was little of the spirit of peace in her Majesty's own speech, or in the proceedings of her ministers. Complimentary addresses were carried in both Houses, the Whigs in the House of Commons scarcely venturing to divide. Bolingbroke being all for an immediate attack on the adversaries of the Government, recourse was had to the usual expedient, the Commissioners of Public Accounts. Two more inflammatory reports were published on the alleged mismanagement of the revenue in the departments of the army and navy, reflecting, of course, on former Whig officials in general, and on Wharton, Marlborough, and the departed Godolphin in particular, and not even sparing Bolingbroke's old friend, Paymaster Mr. James Brydges. Once more a Bill, continuing these indefatigable Commissioners of the Public Accounts, was brought in; and once more all the opponents of the peace were publicly branded as persons who delighted in war.*

The two parties now felt themselves engaged in a struggle for life or death. Animosity had kindled animosity, rancour had produced rancour; neither faction was disposed to extend justice, much less mercy, to the other. The peace of Utrecht became the symbol of the triumph of the Tories; and the mere mention of the treaty had on the Whigs the same effect as the sight of a red flag is said to have on a mad bull.

Just at this time Addison's play of Cato was brought upon the stage. Both parties thronged to Covent Garden on the first night of the performance. Steele had undertaken to pack a house; and a zealous party of honest Whigs from the City under the command of Sir Gilbert Heathcote, the Governor of the Bank, filled the benches of the pit. On the one side of the boxes shone the stars of the great Whig peers in opposition;

* See Parl. Hist., vi. 1176—1207.

on the other the scarcely less brilliant assembly of the Tories; while, in the stage-box, appeared the handsome face and noble presence of Bolingbroke himself, the author of the Peace of Utrecht, the central object of Tory pride and Whig hatred. Such a scene in a theatre has been seldom witnessed. The performance before the curtain surpassed in interest that which took place behind. Every line in which the unfortunate Cato lamented the expiring liberties of his country was applied by the Whigs to Marlborough and their own leaders, who had been driven from power by the intrigues of their opponents; and the Tories took up the applause in order to show that they were not prepared to admit the propriety of the inference. The happiest party hit of that evening was admitted by the Whigs themselves to have been made by Bolingbroke. After the performance he called Booth, who had played the part of Cato, into his box, and in the sight of the audience gave him a purse with fifty guineas, for, as the Secretary pointedly observed, defending the cause of liberty so well against a perpetual dictator. Bolingbroke was, however, at all times a warm friend and patron of Booth. We find him not only presenting this meritorious actor with those fifty guineas, but recommending him to the Lord Chamberlain, and at all times in every way endeavouring to promote both his pecuniary and professional interests.* But the Jacobites regarded the play of Cato as opposed to their political principles. They said that it had been made by the Whigs to damage the Tories, and was expected to have almost as much effect as Sacheverell's trial.†

* Letters to the Earl of Shrewsbury.

† "There is a tragedy called Cato, made by the Whigs. It was acted several times. It makes impression on the people. The Whigs say it will have as good an effect on the people as Sacheverell's sermons and trial."—Letter of Rogers to Sir W. Ellis in Stuart Papers, April 20, 1713.

It was, however, Bolingbroke's policy at this time to put the best interpretation he could on the tragedy of Cato. Oxford was known to have been making some overtures to the Whigs, and was accused by some violent Tories, and particularly Bolingbroke himself, of wishing to carry on the Government in the spirit of neutrality and compromise. Though the Lord Treasurer at the meeting of Parliament had at the moment so far given in to the Secretary as to adopt a more decided system, he had soon again returned to his old habit of delay and hesitation, and the two ministers were immediately as much averse to each other as ever. Oxford was turning wistful glances to Marlborough, who had, in the last November, withdrawn himself to the Continent, and been more recently followed by his Duchess. Some communications, it was whispered, were passing between the Lord Treasurer and Lord Cowper, who represented the more moderate section of the Whigs. Why should not the Secretary follow the example of the Lord Treasurer, and just at the time when the discussions about the peace were coming on, show some courtesies to one or two of the eminent members of the other party? Bolingbroke invited Addison to dinner. They dined together on the very day the peace was proclaimed, and had a discussion on the merits of their respective parties, Addison bringing forward his objections to the principles of the Tories, and Bolingbroke answering them, in a calm and friendly manner. It would have been well for this brilliant and aspiring Tory statesman, had he, during this the season of his political greatness, sought more of these occasions for displaying a spirit of moderation and conciliation. The Secretary's attention to Addison excited so much interest, that Prior wrote

gaily to Bolingbroke from Paris about a report of his having rescued Cato from Whiggism.*

But if Bolingbroke hoped that any attentions he could show to Addison and other eminent members of his party would induce them to approve of his policy he was sadly deceived. Knowing of the dissensions that prevailed among the ministers, they were not disinclined to eat the Secretary's dinners to promote this growing disunion. But this was all. No true Whig could bring himself to approve of the peace of Utrecht; it was opposed to all his policy; it shocked all his prejudices. He had also motives of party vengeance to stimulate him; and many of these Bolingbroke had himself furnished in no stinted measure. It was on the 4th of May that the peace was proclaimed; on that very day eleven years before the war had been declared. On the 9th, the Queen informed the Parliament, that, in exercise of her undoubted prerogative, she had ratified the treaties of peace and commerce with France, and had ordered them without delay to be laid before the two Houses. The treaty of peace, from the moment it received the sovereign's sanction, however much it might be disapproved, and however much those who negotiated it might be afterwards called to account for their conduct, could not be modified by any vote in Parliament. But the treaty of commerce, as altering the duties on French goods, required to give it effect the deliberate assent of the House of Commons; it was on the objectionable eighth and ninth articles of this arrangement that the opponents of the Government fastened, and the great conflict began. During the course of the contest Bolingbroke had frequently to regret his early retirement

* Bol. Corr., ii. 393.

from the great popular assembly which his fervid eloquence had so often animated. It was there that his cherished work was most fiercely attacked; it was there that it most needed a brilliant and skilful defender.

The eighth article put the commercial relations of France and England on the footing of equality. In diplomatic jargon it was called the most-favoured nation clause, and declared that, for the future, the subjects of both kingdoms were to enjoy the same privileges as any others in respect to all duties and impositions. The ninth article sought to carry out this agreement by providing in England that no higher custom should in two months be paid on French goods than were levied on those of any other nation. These stipulations sought to bring back the commerce of the two countries to the same position regarding each other as had been established during the greater portion of the reign of Charles II. Even then, however, the merchants had loudly complained; prohibitory duties had been passed; and since the Revolution it had seemed to be the object of the English legislature to shut out all French goods whatsoever.

The prospect of so sudden a change appeared alarming. The commerce of the two nations, having been artificially dammed up, had found other channels. We had a treaty with Portugal obliging us to charge a third less on the Portuguese wines than on those of France; and the Portuguese people were among our best customers. We had established extensive silk manufactories; and the persecution which Louis XIV. had carried on for so many years against the Huguenots on the revocation of the edict of Nantes, had powerfully contributed to supply the weavers of Spitalfields with numerous bodies of skilled workmen. The balance of trade with

France had always been against us; while with the demands we had made for silk from Italy and Turkey, a great market for our woollen manufactures in return had grown up, which had become, in every point of view, exceedingly advantageous. The linen manufacturers and the paper manufacturers also flourished as they had never flourished in those days when there was almost unrestricted commercial intercourse with France. By this treaty, however, as negotiated by Bolingbroke, a free trade with France was sought to be established; and the commercial prosperity which had stricken such deep root, even amid revolutions and wars, would, in the opinion of many Whigs, by a free trade with France, be destroyed.*

The Whigs, however, in the House of Commons, were in a decided minority, and by themselves could effect little. As long as the question was a mere party contest, Bolingbroke's supporters had decidedly the advantage. On the first division, the Whigs, led by Walpole and Stanhope, only numbered one hundred and thirty against two hundred and fifty-two. When the next question was put, they abandoned the field altogether, and leave was given to bring in the bill by an immense majority. Bolingbroke, who watched the debate from the place assigned to the peers, had reason to congratulate himself on the manner in which his work had been received. The political treaty had scarcely been attacked at all; and the principle of the commercial treaty had been triumphantly affirmed. What could a successful minister desire more?

So at least it appeared; but these appearances were not to be trusted. Even some Tories who professed to

* A very clear summary of their objections will be found in Tindal's Continuation of Rapin.

dread any delay in the signing of the treaties, began, as soon as they were laid on the tables of the two Houses, to look upon them with coldness. The most remarkable representation in condemnation of the war had been moved by Sir Thomas Hanmer. He was a handsome, eloquent, and accomplished man, artful, plausible, and vacillating, ready on occasion to play fast and loose with both parties; to be a Tory and yet declare himself heartily opposed to Jacobitism, to be for the House of Hanover, and yet act very lukewarmly in its service. Sir Thomas being disappointed in not receiving the offer of a place began to join with the Whigs in their objections to the eighth and ninth articles of the commercial treaty. The ferment which had at first been confined within the walls of St. Stephen's chapel was taken up by the great towns. The clothiers, weavers, and paper manufacturers became loud in their outcries. This, it was said, was not to be considered a party question. The prosperity of England was in jeopardy; her trade was threatened with destruction. Petitions from the seats of commerce and manufacture every day poured into the House of Commons, echoing the alarm of nearly all the trading classes of the kingdom. The lovers of claret were indeed anxious for French wines; and, as a Whig wittily said, would not sup-port. But the lovers of claret, except among the higher classes, were in a minority, and could do little against the interested prejudices of nearly the whole commercial community. A general election, too, was approaching; and the trading classes would evidently make their power felt. This was the third session of the Parliament, which, according to the provisions of the Triennial Act, was to be dissolved in the autumn; and the ministers who had been so confident of a majority at the next election greater than they

even then possessed, saw that power which seemed so firmly established shaken to the foundations.

Under these circumstances the wisest course would have been at once to have given way. Many of the friends of the Government hoped that the bill would be withdrawn at all events for that session. It was rumoured that the Lord Treasurer, who had very little to do with the negotiation of the treaty of commerce, and was by no means anxious for its success, was of this opinion. The Tories, too, in the House of Commons, were overmatched in the debates on this question. Orthodox country gentlemen, at the head of whom was Bolingbroke's young friend, Sir William Windham, might be great on the folly of continental alliances, the danger of standing armies, the selfishness of the Dutch, the iniquities of Marlborough, and the dangers of the Church; but, as Bolingbroke himself afterwards confessed, commercial matters they could not be expected to understand, and even when they were right in their conclusions they were wrong in their arguments.

The defence of these obnoxious eighth and ninth articles was generally left to a tool of the Secretary's own, Arthur Moore, who was then a commissioner of trade, and had originally been a footman. On commercial questions, Bolingbroke's knowledge was scarcely more profound than that of the country gentlemen who supported him, and Arthur Moore had on these subjects been his constant adviser. This man had some ready talents, but his education corresponded with the station from which he had sprung; he had neither learning nor eloquence; he was mean, sordid, and servile; in the worst of those pecuniary transactions which have been charged against the Secretary Moore's

agency can be distinctly traced. It was under his great encouragement that Bolingbroke sent out the expedition to Canada; and it was Moore who received the order on the Treasury for the twenty-six thousand pounds, of which twenty thousand mysteriously disappeared into the pockets of Lady Masham. He was supposed to be a great authority on matters relating to the trade with Spain, and professed to know how England could enrich herself by this traffic more than by all her continental alliances and privileges extorted from her partners in the war. But this great idea did not prevent him, when, relying on his knowledge, Bolingbroke allowed him to superintend the negotiations of the Spanish commercial treaty, from accepting an enormous bribe from the Spanish minister to acquiesce in some unjust stipulations which excited the utmost indignation of the House of Commons. Such a man, though aided by Defoe, who, in his periodical called the Mercator had become the advocate of a free trade with France, was scarcely a match in debate for Walpole and the great Whig merchants, directors of the East India Company and governors of the Bank of England, who, as one man, declaimed against the bill.*

Authority, interest, prejudice, and passion, were all against the commercial treaty. To the surprise, however, of their own friends, the Tories persisted in going into committee on the bill. The most distinguished persons in all the branches of trade affected by the measure were examined at the bar. Their evidence was decidedly unfavourable to the agreement made with the French Government. The country gentlemen, always patriotic at heart, listened patiently to the

* For the character of Arthur Moore, see Oxford's Brief Account of Public Affairs; and the History of the White Staff.

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examination of the witnesses, and to the voluminous petitions against the bill read by the Clerk of the House; and at last even members of the October Club began to sympathize with the representations of the silk merchants, the Portuguese merchants, the Turkey merchants, and the Italian merchants, who declared that if the bill were passed they would be inevitably ruined. The first sign of a ministerial defeat was by a clause being inserted to strike out the four excepted species of goods from the tariff of 1664. But the decisive struggle occurred on Monday, the 15th of June, when the motion was made that the bill should be engrossed. In vain Arthur Moore exerted all his ingenuity to persuade the House that the proposed arrangement conferred a great boon on British commerce. Sir Thomas Hanmer, to the dismay of the ministers, declared himself openly against any further progress with the measure. He was followed on the same side by two official personages, a Lord of the Admiralty and a Commissioner of the Public Accounts on whose support the Government had fairly calculated. At eleven o'clock at night the question of the engrossment of the bill was lost by one hundred and ninety-four votes against one hundred and eighty-five.*

This defeat settled the fate of the commercial treaty for the session. Such was the unfortunate termination of a contest in which Bolingbroke had sanguinely counted upon a great parliamentary triumph. Sir Thomas Hanmer, indeed, hoping to make amends to his ministerial friends, himself proposed an address of thanks to the Queen for the treaties of peace and commerce; and this address her Majesty, under Bolingbroke's advice, somewhat liberally construed into a vote

* Parl. Hist., vi. 1223.

of direct approbation of both measures. But there was no doing away with the effect of the defeat the Government had sustained. The disaster was ominous. It showed that on great questions, affecting their very existence, the ministers could not depend on the obedience of their majority. In the Upper House Lord Anglesea and other peers who had been looked upon as supporters of the administration, displayed a similar spirit of opposition. What did this portend? Moderate men were becoming scrupulous. But Bolingbroke was entering on a course which required, as the indispensable element of success, an obedient majority voting blindly, without asking questions. He became very much harassed, was taken seriously ill, felt himself almost desperate, and declared to Shrewsbury and Prior that he suffered more than at any former period of his life.*

Very few, however, of the ministerial acts of Bolingbroke can be so successfully defended as this commercial treaty which was so heavily censured. Some of the details were undoubtedly open to great objection; but the general principle of seeking to promote a free trade with France, and establishing the peace on the foundation of the commercial interests of the two countries, was far-sighted, liberal, and sound. In this respect, at least, his policy appears in a far more advantageous light than that of the Whigs, who, heated by party opposition and national prejudices, from condemning the treaty proceeded to condemn all trade with France whatever. On this point, if on this point alone, Bolingbroke was before his age. It is impossible not to sympathize with what he wrote on this subject to the Duke of Shrewsbury:—"I believe it will be of use to insinuate to

* Letters to Shrewsbury and Prior, of July 4, 1713.

Monsieur de Torcy, that as, among other things, the factious people here intend, by their opposition to the settlement of any trade with France, to keep the nations estranged from each other, to cultivate the prejudices which have been formerly raised, and which, during two long wars, have taken deep root, and also to prevent the wearing them out, which would be the natural necessary consequence of an open advantageous trade; so we, on our part, and the ministers of France on theirs, ought to counterwork their designs, and to finish what relates to commerce, more in the character of statesmen than of merchants." To Prior he repeated this sentiment in language even still more explicit, and, for the justness of the views it expressed, deserving of all approbation. "I cannot omit mentioning to you a thing which I spoke of in one of my letters to the Duke of Shrewsbury, and which, in my opinion, is of a good deal of consequence towards confirming that peace and friendship which the late treaty establishes between the two nations. The Whigs, who have been beat off from all their other attacks, seem to fix themselves on the treaty of commerce as their last hold, and endeavour to raise a ferment among the people by scanning, straining, and misrepresenting every article, nay, every syllable in it, and propagating, with wonderful industry, that all trade whatever with France is prejudicial to Britain. The French ministers will easily see, I suppose, and if they do not, they ought to be shown this, among other views, is calculated to hinder those prejudices which our people have been possessed with against France, and which begin now to wear off, from being extinguished; to keep up the strangeness between the two nations, and to preserve such a temper of mind in our people as may dispose them, upon every slight

occasion, to a dispute with France. Now the most effectual way of preventing this is certainly an open and advantageous commerce between the two kingdoms. Nothing unites like interest; and when once our people have felt the sweet of carrying on a trade to France under reasonable regulations, the artifices of Whiggism will have the less effect amongst them. As this is true, so it is proper enough to be insinuated to the French ministers, and, it is to be hoped, will make them more easy in the settlement of such points as remain still to be decided relating to commerce." * Statesmen, on this question, have had to contend against the inveterate jealousies of both nations. The prejudices of the French people certainly equalled the prejudices of the Whigs; and even the prejudices of the Whigs had not very unnaturally been provoked and encouraged by the servility to France of the last Stuart kings, the pride and ambition of Louis XIV., and the dangers of the Protestant succession. As long as there was a Roman Catholic pretender to the British throne, directly or indirectly patronized by France, it could not be easy to establish between the two countries those pacific relations which are the very life of commerce. But it would have been well for the reputation of Bolingbroke as a statesman had his views on most political questions been so enlightened as they undoubtedly were on the treaty of commerce with France.

Many of the provisions of the general treaty of Utrecht, though not at the time so strongly attacked, were open to much more severe animadversion. It was, however, to this general treaty, rather than to the treaty of commerce, that, to the last hour of his life,

* Letter to the Duke of Shrewsbury, of May 29, 1713, O. S., and Letter to Prior, of May 31, 1713, O. S.

Bolingbroke looked back with the most complacency. The persecution to which he was afterwards subjected for negotiating it only rendered it dearer in his eyes. He would hear little against it; what his enemies represented as his shame, he regarded as his glory. A few general observations on some of the leading clauses of this celebrated treaty may therefore here be considered necessary.

One of the greatest triumphs of a diplomatist is to negotiate an honourable peace for his country out of an unsuccessful war. The glory of this achievement was claimed by Torcy when he compared the terms which were offered to France at the conferences at the Hague and Gertruydenberg in 1709 and 1710, with those which she signed at Utrecht in 1713.* Bolingbroke was in just the opposite situation. The English statesman had to bring his country honourably out of the most successful war she had ever waged. He was not a supplicant but a dictator; nothing that he might consider it his duty to demand could the enemy refuse. As the prize of the contest, the Spanish monarchy, was left in the hands of Philip, though France had been defeated in many battles, and could not protect her own frontiers, it was but reasonable to expect that the peace should in every other respect have been satisfactory to England. Yet Bolingbroke himself afterwards admitted that the terms were not all satisfactory, and that better might and ought to have been obtained.† He gave, indeed, a singular reason for the deficiencies of the treaty: they were all owing to the opposition of the Whigs and the allies. But the real cause why France profited so much by the dissensions among the members of the

* Mémoires du Marquis de Torcy, ii. 225.

† Letter to Sir W. Windham.

Grand Alliance was, in fact, as has been shown in the course of this narrative, the manner in which the negotiations were begun and carried on by Bolingbroke and his colleagues. It was preposterous to blame their political opponents for what was the inevitable result of their own conduct. If there was disunion among the allies, and if France profited by this disunion, it was brought about entirely by the manner in which the English Government proceeded with the negotiations. There was not a single flaw in the alliance when Harley and St. John entered office; but dissension was inevitable after the private understanding had, through Gaultier, been established between France and England to the disadvantage of the Dutch and the other allies. During the later period of the negotiations we find Bolingbroke himself as conscious of this fact as the rest of the world. When it seemed that France, on a certain point, was likely to be stubborn, the English Secretary of State directed Prior to ask Torcy candidly whether there were not many exceptional circumstances in the way which England had negotiated the treaty, that ought to render the French Government, merely as an act of gratitude, ready to make every reasonable concession to her demands?*

There was no mistaking the meaning of these words. England released herself from her engagements, and particularly from the eighth article of the Grand Alliance, in a manner it is impossible to justify; and there was very much in the proceedings of Bolingbroke, with regard to the Dutch, not to be contemplated without indignation and sorrow. The consequence was that France triumphed at Utrecht, that England permitted her conquered enemy to give the law to her faithful and victorious ally. This

* Letter to Prior.

was certainly neither necessary nor honourable. The nation was undoubtedly tired of the war; a peace was highly desirable; but to be for the peace of Utrecht is to be, not for peace in the abstract, but for a particular treaty which was both, as it was negotiated, and in some of its provisions highly objectionable.

The cardinal point of this treaty, even in Bolingbroke's opinion, was the renunciations made by Philip and the French princes. But the English Secretary had been distinctly told by the parties immediately concerned, that what he demanded as indispensable for the future security of Europe was no security whatever. The greatest French lawyers had endorsed this opinion; nor was it only a theory; it had in that generation been deliberately acted upon: if renunciations had been of any value, there would have been no war of the Spanish succession at all. Philip himself sat on the Spanish throne in wanton disregard of solemn renunciations. How idle, then, was it, how worse than idle, to hold out to the English people these renunciations as a satisfactory security for preventing the union of the Spanish and French crowns! Bolingbroke well knew them to be otherwise. He knew that for any effect they were likely to have on those who signed them they were just so much waste paper. But his idea was that though they might be disregarded by Philip himself, it would, in the event of the death of the child that stood between the King of Spain and the inheritance of the French throne, be the interest of the Duke of Orleans and the other French princes to maintain the validity of the renunciations; and that they would certainly be the justification of the other powers of Europe in taking up arms to prevent a result against which these renunciations had so solemnly provided. Thus, in a phrase

which was introduced by Bolingbroke into one of Queen Anne's speeches to her Parliament, and was much ridiculed by the Whigs at the time, the treaty would execute itself. But it was not likely that the ambition of the Duke of Orleans, had he even been disposed to dispute Philip's right to the French crown, would have been able to give effect to the renunciations against the decision of the ablest French lawyers and the general feeling of the people; and it must have certainly produced a civil war in which Philip would have been supported by the whole power of Spain. The determination of the other States to see the renunciations carried out, on which Bolingbroke also calculated, must as certainly have led to a general war, in which England and the other members of the Grand Alliance could scarcely have been in so commanding a position as they were when the conferences at Utrecht began. At all events, the seeds of future wars were sown by the very contingency contemplated; and the renunciations themselves, the guarantee of peace, were to become the standard round which the enemies of the House of Bourbon were to rally.

Happily, however, the contingency which was looked upon as all but inevitable never occurred. The life of the young dauphin, then supposed, both by physicians and statesmen, not to be worth six months' purchase, was spared; and the efficacy of the renunciations were never brought to the test. Enough, however, occurred, even while Bolingbroke still remained in office, to convince him that Philip was, in the event of the child's demise, fully prepared to set at nought the solemn obligations to which he had sworn, and, in defiance of all renunciations, to revive and to act upon his pretensions to the French throne.*

* See Prior to Bolingbroke, August $\frac{23}{12}$, in the State Paper Office.

It would have been well if the assumed validity of these invalid renunciations had been the principal objection to the treaty of Utrecht. No single article of the treaty was regarded by Bolingbroke with more satisfaction than the Assiento Contract, or the stipulation that England should enjoy for thirty years the exclusive right of conveying African slaves to the Spanish West Indies and the coast of America. This was the glorious privilege which he insisted should be yielded to England, especially to recompense her for her sacrifices in the war, for the millions of treasure she had spent, and for the blood of her children so prodigally shed at Blenheim, at Ramillies, at Oudenarde, and Malplaquet. Other advantages of the treaty might be enjoyed in common by the allies; but this great distinction, as the queen expressly called it, in a royal address, was to be reserved to England alone.* It was this stipulation which, more than any other part of the conduct of the British ministry in the course of the negotiations, roused the jealousy and distrust of the Dutch, and induced them so long to refuse to accept the proposals of peace. Their obstinacy on this point excited the bitter scorn of Bolingbroke, and those who wrote under his inspiration. "It will," observed Swift, "have an odd sound in history, and appear hardly creditable, that in several petty republics of single towns which make up the States General, it should be formally debated whether the Queen of Great Britain who preserved the Commonwealth at the charge of so many millions, should be suffered to enjoy after a peace, the liberty granted her by Spain of selling African slaves in the Spanish dominions of Ame-

* The Queen's Speech, containing the plan of peace delivered to Parliament, June 6, 1712.

rica."* It has a much odder sound in history, and it appears much more incredible, that great statesmen and divines of the Church of England should have been so eager and proud to negotiate for their country, as a great and exclusive advantage, the liberty of selling African slaves at all. Gladly, indeed, should we see expunged from the roll of history the disgrace of ever having sought to recompense ourselves for the cost of a glorious war by taking to ourselves as a privilege, this shameful and iniquitous traffic. So, however, it was. Even as a mere political arrangement this bargain was not only invidious but most unfair; though what now appears to us the blacker stain on humanity makes the blot on our public faith comparatively slight. By the articles of the Grand Alliance, England and all the other states subscribing them, were pledged neither to enter into any separate treaty with the enemy, nor to seek to negotiate for themselves any exceptional privilege to the exclusion of the other members of the confederacy. But it is quite clear that this obligation was totally disregarded when our Government insisted on this concession to themselves of the Assiento Contract by France and Spain before the proposals for peace were even communicated to the rest of the allies. The Whigs, however, were not superior to the Tories in their perception of the guilt and infamy of this miserable stipulation; and the Secretary of State who extorted it, if he could be now heard in his defence, might plead that he made no pretensions to be either better or wiser in this respect than his contemporaries. Eager as the enemies of Oxford and Bolingbroke were to find, and even to assume, matter of accusation against them, they allowed this Assiento Contract to pass without rebuke.

* History of the Four Last Years of the Queen.

It is not mentioned once in the articles of impeachment exhibited against either of the two statesmen, nor even in the inflammatory reports of the Committees of the House of Commons. Objectionable as it was from nearly every point of view, this Assiento Contract was evidently regarded as the portion of the treaty of Utrecht that was on the whole the least reprehensible.

The Whigs reserved all their indignation for another business, which was, however, bad enough. This was the fate of the Catalans, for ever to be sadly associated with the memory of Bolingbroke and the fair fame of English statesmen. We had in 1705 summoned the people of Catalonia to arms in the cause of Charles III. and the allies. We had denounced the most fearful penalties against them if they did not at once respond to the call. But trusting to the solemn promises of the Queen of England, that she would see secured to them all the privileges they had enjoyed under the House of Austria, they had obeyed the summons. In Catalonia Charles III. had been regarded as the lawful sovereign. There the gold and the arms of Philip had been powerless, and twice had the allies entered Barcelona in triumph. But what was to become of the Catalans at the peace? The treaty was provisionally signed with Spain in April; it was ratified at the beginning of July. The British and Imperial troops were, according to the terms of a convention, evacuating Catalonia; but nothing had been done to secure to the Catalans either the ancient privileges they had been promised, or even a safeguard from the vengeance of their new sovereign. They refused to lay down their arms, and persisted in making war on their own account. At last Barcelona was besieged, and the world saw with astonishment and indignation an English squad-

ron, under Sir James Wishart, preparing to co-operate with the troops of Philip in the siege of Barcelona. The city was reduced to ashes, the country laid waste with fire and sword, and the Catalans suffered all the horrors of military conquest and subjugation by a master whom they abhorred, and whom, under British instigation, they had repeatedly provoked and defied. The conduct of England to the Catalans at the treaty of Utrecht was worse than her conduct to the Genoese at the treaty of Vienna, a hundred years afterwards; for though in both cases very solemn promises, which ought never to be made by a great power unless they are fulfilled at any sacrifice, were utterly disregarded, we did not send an English fleet to act against the very people whom we had called to arms.

It would be unjust to Bolingbroke to say that he never saw the necessity of making good terms for the Catalans. On the contrary, he was fully aware of the obligation England had contracted towards this unfortunate people, and frequently, in the course of the negotiations, expressed his sense of these engagements in the most explicit terms. In an early part of the negotiations he wrote:—"Particular notice is, at all events, to be taken of the Catalans, Arragonians, Valencians, and whoever else has declared on our side in Spain during the war. This article is just in itself, extremely honourable for the Queen to insist upon, and cannot well admit of much difficulty on the part of the French."* During his visit to France the English statesman had also represented, in the strongest manner, to Torcy the importance of conciliating the Catalans. Gaultier had, by his directions, made similar representations. Just after Bolingbroke returned to

* Additional Minutes of Instructions for Mr. Harley at Utrecht.

England, the French minister wrote to him from Fontainebleau that the king had sent a courier to Madrid advising his grandson to pardon the Catalans, and that Philip would undoubtedly follow this good advice.* Still later, we find Bolingbroke writing to Lord Strafford :—"Your Lordship will continue to insist on those terms, that the Catalans be restored to their ancient privileges, and we will carry the point."† Nothing, apparently, could be more satisfactory than the endeavours of the English minister. How, then, came it that these efforts turned out entirely futile, and that the case of the Catalans became such a blot on the treaty of Utrecht and the statesmanship of Bolingbroke?

This is not easy entirely to apprehend; but it arose, probably, in a great measure from the haste with which the treaty was at last signed. The ministers, the nation, and the Parliament had all become impatient of delay; the Queen, and Louis XIV., were both in a precarious state; the cabinet could not meet the two Houses without informing them that a peace with France and Spain was concluded. The state of domestic politics, even the safety of the ministers themselves, and the manner in which the Emperor held out, all made it of more importance that the other negotiations should be brought to a close. In diplomatic language, it was necessary to finish. The Spanish Court took advantage of this necessity. As soon as the general treaty was signed, Philip and his advisers began to construe their obligations in the narrowest sense; and on every article of the treaty of commerce, and other points which had not been made matter of express stipulation, they became proud,

* Bol. Corr., ii. 26. † Letter of Feb. 3, 1713.

MILE END

reserved, punctilious, and overbearing. They attempted to elude the terms of the treaty, even in the cession of Sicily to the Duke of Savoy. The obstinacy of the Catalans in refusing to lay down their arms was considered a sufficient reason for releasing Philip from the promise he had made to the English Government to give them all the advantages of the peace, and to restore them to their former rights. Bolingbroke unfortunately permitted himself to acquiesce in this interpretation of the royal mind. He had many other affairs on his hands, and the Catalans had become very troublesome. He was enraged with them for their former opposition to the peace; and, just as in the case of the Dutch, when once he was enraged with any people for opposing his policy, his anger soon turned to positive hatred, and he was inclined to abandon them contemptuously to the mercy of their enemies. His great mistake was in not making the concession of the ancient privileges of the Catalonians, and their protection from the hostility of Philip and his Castilians, one of the express conditions of the peace, that they might have claimed the privileges their ancestors had enjoyed on the same terms as Philip held his crown. Proper securities ought to have been taken, and some solid satisfaction have been given to the Catalans before the English troops had been reduced in that province by a single bayonet, or Philip have been acknowledged as sovereign of Spain at all. As Bolingbroke had himself confessed, the honour of England was deeply concerned on this question; and no military connection, on her part, with the enemies of the Catalans, nor disgust at the obstinate perverseness of the poor people themselves, could release her from this great obligation.

But Bolingbroke had at this time entertained the idea

that it was necessary for England to manage the Court of Spain. To weaken the attachment of Philip to the country of his birth, and to encourage him in asserting the independence of the country of his adoption, the English Secretary regarded as a great stroke of statesmanship. The two Houses of Bourbon might, he thought, be set against each other. With this object the Spanish Court was allowed to take liberties which, under other circumstances, would not have been tolerated. With this object Philip was permitted to make difficulties about the treaty of commerce, to assume a haughty tone to Portugal, and to trifle with the most important obligations. With this object, at last, as a recompense for some concession which England was in a condition to have extorted, his Catholic Majesty was, as there is only too much reason to believe, suffered to act the tyrant to the Catalans, to brand them as rebels, and to issue sanguinary orders, against which the Duke of Berwick, who was in command of Philip's troops, strongly remonstrated, and refused to carry out. Philip, as Berwick afterwards declared, hated the Catalans with all the hatred of a Bourbon despot, and the English Government permitted itself to minister to that hatred.* Bolingbroke condescended to adopt the absurd pretensions of the Princess Ursini to a Flemish throne, to instruct the British plenipotentiaries at Utrecht to advocate her cause, and even discussed the propriety of putting her in possession of the towns in the Netherlands which were, until peace was settled with the Emperor, garrisoned by British troops. His voluminous correspondence with this woman, the Lady Masham of the Court of Spain, was in a strain of the most

* Mémoires du Maréchal de Berwick, ii. 203, edit. Petitot.

polished flattery and high-strained sentiment. The English Secretary was, however, all this time fully conscious of the ridiculous farce he was playing. "As long as the Queen of Spain lives," he said, "she will govern her husband; and as long as the princess lives she will govern her, so that the advantage of flattering this old woman's pride, for her avarice we cannot flatter, must be solid and lasting."* The advantage was not so solid and lasting as Bolingbroke supposed. A few days after this letter was written came the news that the Queen of Spain was no more; and the power of the Princess de Ursini was extinguished almost as suddenly as that of Lady Masham, from a similar cause, a few months afterwards. With the power of the princess expired all her pretensions to a monarchy; but the effect on Bolingbroke's reputation, of his deference to the Spanish court, in the case of the Catalans, was not so easily extinguished. It remains, and must ever remain, one of the greatest blemishes in his political career. How his confident expectations of the effect that the conclusion of the peace would have on domestic politics were disappointed, very soon became painfully evident.

* Letter to the Earl of Strafford, Feb. 13, 1714.

CHAPTER X.

1713—1714.

THE CRISIS.

Ever since his accession to office, Bolingbroke's constant cry had been, Only give us peace. Peace included almost everything that, as a statesman, he professed to desire. Peace was to annihilate the Whigs for ever as a party, and to bring back a golden age to the Tories. The advantages of peace were in themselves to excuse all the questionable proceedings which had attended the negotiations, and all the acknowledged deficiencies in the terms of the treaty. The end was to justify the means. Ministers having so great an object as this peace in view could not afford to haggle about small matters, or to stand out even on points which might be considered of some importance. Whiggish politicians might threaten them with the vengeance of the Court of Hanover for deserting the alliance; but, with this peace once secured, what would be the Court of Hanover to the ministers? They could afford to despise its enmity; for they would be in a position to defy it.

Such was the brilliant vision which had appeared to the eyes of Bolingbroke as he pursued those intricate negotiations. It had inspired him with zeal, given him energy

when others were weary, and courage when others were in despair. Two years before, it had found expression in a letter to Lord Strafford; and the sentences that the Secretary let fall from his pen on the subject may very fairly be considered to photograph the delightful prospect he had in his mind. "The Elector of Hanover," he wrote, "has now placed himself at the head of a party, and that, too (whatever he is made to believe), by great degrees the least at this time, and whenever we shall have got rid of our war, likely to be still weaker. The landed interest will then rise, and the monied interest, which is the great support of Whiggism, must of course decline. There is something unaccountable in this matter; the Elector will be, one time or other, undeceived. I pray God it may be soon."*

The peace had at length been signed, ratified, proclaimed. But the expected result had not immediately followed. The Whigs were neither destroyed nor silenced; the monied interest had not declined; the Bank still held up its head. The treaty of commerce with France had been attacked and condemned. Already before the session in which the treaties were laid before Parliament had terminated, Bolingbroke's bright anticipations had turned out to be only a pleasing dream. The golden age of the Tories appeared more distant than ever. As he himself afterwards confessed, the work on which he and his friends had so long built as the basis of their strength, was partly destroyed before their eyes, and they were stoned with the ruins.†

Bolingbroke and Oxford, having quarrelled when their circumstances were prosperous, were not likely to become better friends when their political affairs were

* Letter to the Earl of Strafford, March 7, 1711.

† Letter to Sir W. Windham.

going ill. The Secretary was nearly beside himself with rage. There have been colleagues in the same Government hating each other, and eager to trip up each other, and yet preserving, in outward appearance, all politeness, and even friendship; bowing, smiling, complimenting, shaking hands as though they were on the best terms in the world. But this was not Bolingbroke's way. His temper never allowed him to keep up appearances. His anger showed itself in the most stormy reproaches; he delivered the most violent invectives in the presence of clerks and domestic servants; and the Secretary of State could scarcely be prevented from coming to blows with the Prime Minister.* Foreign ministers and ambassadors abroad were at this time made acquainted with their dissensions. The breach between the two statesmen had never before become so obvious as at the prorogation of Parliament in the middle of July of this year, 1713.

Bolingbroke had in some respects cause for being angry. He believed, and apparently with some reason, that the defeat the Court had sustained on the commercial treaty, and the disaffection which had arisen in the ranks of the Government on other questions, were all owing to Oxford's bad management. He could bear, he said, to be beaten in a fair fight by the Whigs; he could bear to lose a victory by the desertion of the Tories, if they were really at heart opposed to the cause of the Government. "But," wrote Bolingbroke to Prior, "our enemies are in themselves contemptible, and our friends are well inclined. The former have no strength but what we might have taken from them, and the latter no dissatisfaction but what we might have prevented. Let the game which we have

* See Oxford's Brief Account of Public Affairs, 1714.

be wrested out of our hands: this I can bear; but to play like children with it, till it slips between our fingers to the ground, and sharpers have but to stoop and take it up; this consideration distracts a man of spirit, and not to be vexed in this case is not to be sensible." It was quite clear to Bolingbroke that the defeat of the bill making good the commercial treaty was owing to the opinion prevailing among the Tories that Oxford was indifferent to the passing of the measure during that session. The Treasurer had even written a letter to Bromley, the Speaker, and, since Bolingbroke's withdrawal, the ministerial leader in the House of Commons, advising him to give up the bill. So little was the ministerial defeat expected that many of Oxford's friends remained neutral; he was himself, over his claret, surprised to hear that the House was sitting late; and could not conjecture what it was that detained the members from their homes.† A pleasant situation for the Prime Minister to be in at an important political crisis, and on the most important night of the session! He had about the same time thrown all the Scotch members into a state of mutiny by insisting, against the opinion of Bolingbroke, on levying an equal malt tax of sixpence a bushel on both kingdoms. They united with the enemies of the Government to distress the ministers; and the Scotch peers, assisted most inconsistently by the Whigs, moved for leave to bring in a bill to dissolve the Union, which, after a warm debate, was only defeated by a very narrow majority. At the same time there was no money in the Treasury. From the debts which had accumulated on the civil list, the salaries of the ambassadors, and the most important

* Letter to Prior, July 25, 1713.

† See Stuart Papers; Macpherson, ii. 425.

officers of the Government were unpaid. Bolingbroke declared that he had received nothing on account of his office for two years; and the Treasurer had even refused to pay him the expenses of his journey to France, though it had been undertaken by the Sovereign's command.*

Amid these difficulties and perplexities Oxford laughed, joked, and shrugged his shoulders. He induced the House of Commons, just at the close of the session, to discharge the debts on the civil list; but he would hear nothing of allowing any sum to the Secretary for his visit to France, and of those expenses Bolingbroke never obtained a single farthing. Oxford was not what he had been. Lady Masham had become his enemy; Bolingbroke was always at her ear; resolutions were taken without consulting the Treasurer, who, naturally jealous and suspicious of all mankind, became more reserved, dilatory, and indolent than ever.

There can be no doubt that he really rejoiced over the defeat of the commercial treaty, and becoming conscious of his precarious position, and the efforts Bolingbroke was making to supplant him, beheld the embarrassment of his own administration with a secret pleasure. The knowledge of this fact gave unusual bitterness to the Secretary's hostility. No terms were at last kept between the two statesmen. Bolingbroke filled his letters to his official correspondents abroad with sneers at Oxford's trifling and insufficient conduct; and the Prime Minister himself, just when their quarrel was at its height, being taken ill of an inflammation in the eyes, an attack of gravel, and a humour in the legs, shut himself up, would see nobody, and did nothing. Oxford took to his bed, and

* Letter to the Earl of Strafford, Aug. 7, 1713.

there he lay for some days meditating on the decline of his favour at Court, and the artifices of the perfidious rival whom he had himself put high in office. The result of his meditations was a long letter to Bolingbroke, on the 25th of July. What the real contents of the epistle were we have no means of knowing; for it is a curious fact, that though Bolingbroke's correspondence during these four busy years of his life appears in general to have been carefully preserved by himself, this important communication has never been discovered. From the despatch of this letter Oxford afterwards dated the loss of all substantial power. Bolingbroke answered this communication on the 27th; and the outward result was the speedy dissolution of Parliament, and several important changes in the ministry.*

The defeat which the Government had sustained in the House of Commons appears to have greatly contributed to bring about these alterations. Since Bolingbroke's elevation to the peerage, both the Secretary of State and the Lord Treasurer had been in the House of Lords. This was the cause of weakness which it was considered necessary to remove. Lord Dartmouth was now appointed Privy Seal, and Mr. Bromley Secretary of State in that nobleman's place; the Third Secretaryship was again revived for the Earl of Mar, who was to have the administration of Scottish affairs; Sir William Windham was translated from the War Office to that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and the Queen giving Bolingbroke the choice, he exchanged the seals of the Northern Department of State for those of the Southern province, which Lord Dartmouth had held for the last three years. Although these modifications in the cabinet were made with Oxford's sanction, they

* Oxford's Brief Account of Public Affairs.

were signs of Bolingbroke's increasing ascendancy. The correspondence with France was at last in his own department. The Lord Treasurer's tenure of office had not, as Oxford afterwards thought fit to represent, from this time become merely nominal; that which became at last a fact, was still, indeed, only the suspicion of his own jealous and distrustful nature, and had some influence in producing the very effect of which he complained. But the Secretary of State was, with the support of Lady Masham, advancing rapidly in court favour. That termination of the peace which his enemies had so long regarded as the period when Bolingbroke would be dismissed from office, was, really, the time from which his personal rivalry with Oxford was first openly displayed, and it became clear that he was fully capable of standing his own ground.

The court was divided into two parties. The Lord Chancellor Harcourt, the Lord Chief Justice Trevor and Sir W. Windham, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, looked up to Bolingbroke as their leader. They were three decided Tories, with a strong tendency to Jacobitism. The rest of their colleagues either remained neutral, or were more or less on the side of Oxford. But the Lord Treasurer had so long trusted nobody, that few people were inclined to trust him; his was not a character to attract personal friends, though he might be liked by dependents, like the honest Under Secretary, Lewis, and Swift, who had gone to Ireland to take possession of the deanery of St. Patrick, and was anxiously summoned again to London in the hope that he might once more make matters up.

The ministers who were generally regarded as favourable to the Treasurer, beheld his struggles with indifference; they might not assist in his fall, but they

were inclined to look upon it without regret. Shrewsbury, being on his embassy to France, out of the way of their dissensions, was appealed to both by Oxford and Bolingbroke. His public entry was over, and he was anxiously expected again in England. He recommended, as by temper he was inclined to practice, moderation and forbearance to the two rival ministers. Bolingbroke wrote to him letter after letter, full of the most unbounded professions of respect and deference, and declaring that he would regulate his conduct in all things by the Duke's advice; but Shrewsbury, though his natural courtesy and habitual restraint prevented him from showing his dissatisfaction, was not at all pleased with his own position, and was not disposed to be made the tool or the dupe of either statesman. Before the genius, the character, the years, and the fame of Shrewsbury, the brilliant and eager Secretary felt himself rebuked.*

Shrewsbury, on his return to England, in August, found Bolingbroke at Windsor. During the indisposition of the Treasurer, and with the new Secretary of State not as yet thoroughly acquainted with his duties, most of the important business of the Government was transacted by Bolingbroke. Windsor was found to be most favourable to the Queen's health; there, with an occasional journey to Hampton, she mostly resided; and there Bolingbroke, at this time, was most frequently in attendance. He was growing almost indispensable to Lady Masham. He seemed to do everything, while the Lord Treasurer growing every day more dissatisfied, uncommunicative, and

* See Bolingbroke's correspondence with Shrewsbury, *passim*, and particularly the letters of May 29, July 4 and 25, and Aug. 20, 1713. For the state of parties at this time see also the Hanover Papers; Letter from L. Hermitage, of July 4, 1713, and of Jacob Mears to the Elector, of Sept. 12, 1713.

sullen, neglected everything but the establishment of his own family by wealthy alliances. No sooner was he sufficiently recovered to be able to move about, than, instead of resuming his official duties, he went into the country to attend to the marriage of his eldest son, Lord Harley, with the Lady Henrietta Cavendish Holles, the daughter and heiress of the Duke of Newcastle. This was a splendid match; to bring it about the ingenuity of the Lord Treasurer had long been taxed; it had appeared to be the object of all his statesmanship: but had he thought only of his position as the chief of the Government, he would have paid some attention to what other people regarded as more important matters. During his absence from Court, he was leaving the field open to Bolingbroke; and the Secretary was rapidly profiting by the opportunity.

At this time there was at least one great improvement in Bolingbroke's habits. His convivial excesses had long been deplored by his best friends. But with the new responsibilities which he felt upon him, he began to restrain himself in the use of the bottle, and to acknowledge that a great minister of state ought to have a more worthy object of pride than boasting about the large quantities of wine he could swallow at a sitting. He drank very much less than he did; and seemed gradually overcoming this, the most wretched of all failings in a man of genius, seeking to play a great part in the world.*

In other respects he was no better than he had been. His life was still as licentious as in his earliest manhood. The same friendly pen that informs us of his reformation in the vice of hard drinking, also lets us

* Swift expressly says that Bolingbroke drunk much less than he had been in the habit of doing.

know at the same time, very unmistakeably, that his morals regarding women had undergone no improvement.* One of his worst faults was to boast of his gallantries to younger men. To the young Count de Montijo, who had come over with the Spanish embassy, and for whom Bolingbroke professed the most tender and romantic friendship, which the young man also on his part affectionately returned, we find the statesman beginning a letter in the following terms:—"I have been many times in love, my dear and amiable Count, in the course of my life, but I never remember to have felt in leaving a mistress such griefs as have pierced my heart in separating from you, nor to have received any billet-doux with a pleasure equal to that produced by your letter." The whole female sex he continued to regard as his natural prey. In the gratification of his licentious passion he was not disinclined to make love to the wives and daughters of his best friends, or to take up with any common creature who happened to attract his vagrant fancy for the hour. He had at last ceased to live with his wife. That there was then, or indeed at any other time, any formal separation, appears very doubtful: it is certain, however, that she was now living in retirement alone at her family seat of Bucklersbury. In a letter from Lady Bolingbroke to Lord Harley, she wrote of herself as a "poor, discarded mistress," which shows sufficiently the cause that had produced this recent separation from her lord.†

"Bucklersbury, Aug. 18, 1713.

"My Lord,

"I am extremely glad to hear that my Lord Treasurer takes care of his health. I hope he will

* Swift in his Enquiry into the Conduct of the Queen's Last Ministry.

† A manuscript copy of this letter may be seen among the Harleian MSS., 4163, 261.

continue to do so; for though I am a poor, discarded mistress, yet my best wishes shall always attend his lordship. I beg my most humble service to him and his lady, and am,

"My Lord,
"Your most faithful servant,
"F. BOLINGBROKE."

This letter is endorsed, "Received at Wimple, Aug. the 22nd, 1713."

After perusing this communication from his lady, it is not surprising to find that Bolingbroke did not spend his autumn holidays this year at Bucklersbury. The attractions of his wife's country seat were neglected by him, and he had a separate domestic establishment at Ashdown Park. Thither he had sent down before him his favourite dogs and horses, and leaving Lady Masham and the Court and business for a brief recreation, he set himself to enjoy a few weeks of hunting. It was the purest of his pleasures. The statesman, in this season of successful intrigue and ambition, became again the country gentleman. Surrounded by his dogs, with a jockey cap on his head, a hunting belt round his waist, and a huge whip in his hand, he was to be met with nearly every day strolling about the fields in the neighbourhood of Ashdown Park. A Tory squire who used to excite much amusement at Bucklersbury, by riding home safely in a state of drunken insensibility, and managing, in some way or other, to open about ten gates on his road through the fields, was not to be met with at Ashdown Park. Still the prosperous statesman had some pleasant companions. One lieutenant-colonel, who was eager to display his ardour in following the Secretary both in politics and over a fence, had the

misfortune to get a fall and to break two or three of his bones. But notwithstanding other similar mishaps, a month's interval of fox-hunting and a country retirement, were an agreeable holiday after all Bolingbroke's labours on the peace of Utrecht, the endless correspondence of his office, and the feverish rivalries in which he was engaged. It is pleasant to find him take leave of the French ambassador in a letter addressed from his hunting stable, and informing his noble correspondent that he was writing among his dogs and horses, and in the deepest rural retirement.*

The season of quiet could not last long. Before setting out again for Whitehall, he was informed that a lady of rank had taken a step which gave him the greatest annoyance. The Dowager Countess of Jersey, the daughter of Charles II.'s closet-keeper, Chiffinch, and a Roman Catholic, just after a midnight interview with Lady Masham, had, against the advice of her best friends, set off for France, carrying with her a younger son, with the object, as it seemed, of bringing him up in the religion of the Church of Rome. Since the death of the late Earl, Bolingbroke had been considered the friend of the Jerseys; being, in fact, a relation by blood, he called himself the cousin of the young earl and his brother. He was at this time endeavouring to bring the Earl of Jersey forward in the public service, and acted as guardian to the family of Villiers. By the proceeding of the dowager Countess, himself, Lady Masham, and the Queen were rendered liable to gross misrepresentation; for in such a time of doubt and suspicions people would be inclined to believe the foolish woman had made an open manifestation of their

* See the Letter à Monsieur le Duc d'Aumont de mon Ecurie, ce 21e Oct., 1713.

adherence to the cause of the Pretender. In fact, this was actually the impression this conduct of Lady Jersey made at Hanover.* Bolingbroke was, however, not disposed to rest under this imputation. He wrote the strongest letters of remonstrance to the countess, telling her that both Lady Masham and himself disapproved of what she had done, and that unless she at once sent her son back to England, he would act in such a manner as to show the world that he had no part in her secret. Prior, who had been the Secretary of the late Earl of Jersey's embassy to France in the reign of William, had been for many years in the closest intimacy with the family. The Dowager, he said, was a Medea, telling her beads. Once the earl, her late husband, had taken up a knife to kill her, and was only prevented from carrying his intention into effect by the poet's interference. The Abbé Gaultier being her confessor, the abduction of the young Harry Villiers from Westminster school was strongly suspected to have been done under the advice of the cunning priest. Prior had to exert all his ingenuity to get the boy sent back to England. Bolingbroke wrote a letter to the boy, beginning Dear kinsman, and concluding, Your most faithful and affectionate cousin. Torcy was appealed to; and his influence at last prevailed on the mother, after many prayers, sighs, and sobs, to give up her son. She would not, however, allow Prior to have any hand in the transfer from Paris to London. She would only surrender the boy to a person expressly authorized by Bolingbroke to receive him, and on the condition that he would continue to watch over the little Harry's education, and allow him to spend his holidays in Bolingbroke's house. These conditions the

* Hanover Papers: Schutz to Rohethon, Oct. 13, 1713.

statesman promised to perform. He sent his favourite groom to Paris, and the boy was, after many delays and difficulties, brought back to England.

This business gave Bolingbroke and Prior almost as much trouble as the negotiations for peace, which had been begun between the Emperor and Louis XIV. at Rastadt. Prior had at the same time another affair of Bolingbroke to settle, also of no little difficulty. This was to distribute the large cargo of Palma, sack, and honey-water which the Secretary had sent as a present to the friends he had made in France. The families of de Torcy and de Noailles were in great commotion. Each member of each family put in a claim for a fair share of the articles. Bolingbroke himself considered that there was another family whose claims should not be neglected. Surely the sister of Madame de Tencin might have a share of the present.* But the honey-water was in great request among the ladies, and the Duchess de Noailles was highly indignant with Prior for acting on Bolingbroke's suggestion. "Matthieu," she exclaimed, "est fripon naturellement; il en a bien la mine. Pardi! il a volé la moitié de mon eau de miel, il l'à donné a sa religieuse défroquée." Bolingbroke, at the same time, presented Torcy with a fine medal of Cæsar; "Il est bien beau," said the French minister, who was, in return, requested by the English statesman to sit for his portrait. "Assure him, dear Matt," wrote Bolingbroke to Prior, "I will place it among the Jennies and the Mollys, and that I will prefer it to all of them." *Le cher Henri's* health was drunk in his own sack by the Torcys, Prior, and Old Lassy, as Madame de Tencin was called. Prior was also packing up a

* "May Madame de Ferriole not have some?"—Bolingbroke to Prior, Sept. 8, 1713.

miniature Venus to send over to Bolingbroke. But in words which are very characteristic of his friend's careless habits, he observed: "If I thought there was a finer picture of the kind in the world, I would not send it to you; all that I desire is, that you would not promise it to anybody before you see it; two hours after you have received it, I take it for granted it is gone." Bolingbroke promised solemnly to keep the miniature Venus for himself; how he fulfilled that promise it is impossible to say.*

As Prior was sending his friend this miniature Venus, there was a lady who had once been regarded by her royal lover as Venus personified, soliciting their attention. This was the lady whom Charles II. had made Duchess of Portsmouth; no longer, however, the proud, vain, and capricious beauty, whose charms had eclipsed those of all her rivals, whose apartments at court had been built of white marble, and rendered brilliant with fittings up of silver and gold, and who had moved in her shame and splendour like an Oriental sultana through the galleries at Whitehall.† She was now a wrinkled old woman. But she was herself quite unconscious of the change which had passed over herself, and over the country in which she had once ruled. Having been obliged to take refuge in France, she thought that she might again return to England, that she was still popular here, that whatever she asked would be granted, that she might again triumph in the court of Queen Anne, as she had triumphed in the court of Charles II. She pestered Bolingbroke and Prior to allow her to

* Prior to Bolingbroke, Nov. 23, 1713, and Bolingbroke to Prior, Dec. 2, 1713.

† See Pepys' Diary.

come over to England once more. But of what she forgot Bolingbroke had a keen perception. He was ready to pay any amount of deference to Lady Masham as the reigning favourite of Queen Anne; but, with all his gallantry and passion for the female sex, for the aged mistress of Charles II. he had but scant courtesy. "For God's sake," he wrote to Prior, "convince the Duchess of Portsmouth, as civilly as you can, that it is impossible she should be welcome here to any one creature; what can she expect, when she has the recollection of a thousand invidious things to struggle with, new favours to ask, and no beauty to plead her cause?"* Frail beauties, like the Duchess of Portsmouth, or cunning intriguers, who, like Lady Masham, humour the weakness, as the others minister to the vices of sovereigns, have, even in the Bolingbroke philosophy, but their day. In a few short months after this time Lady Masham was as much out of place in the Court of England as this poor aged mistress of Charles II.

But the letter in which Bolingbroke expressed his painful sense of the departure of the Duchess of Portsmouth's beauty was written from Windsor on the 2nd of December, when he was himself climbing fast to the highest pinnacle of favour and power. The fates were opposed to Oxford. He was again prevented from attending to his duties at Court and in the Government by the death of his favourite daughter, the Marchioness of Caermarthen. First his absence had been from his own illness; then the marriage of his son; at last the death of his daughter: but the result was still the same. His domestic virtues might be numbered among his misfortunes. He was always out of the way; and

* Letter to Prior, Dec. 2, 1713.

everything was left to Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke, indeed, had been taken ill, too, after his return from Ashdown Park; but he had managed to prevent his indisposition from interfering with his business. He was in constant attendance upon the Queen; his letters to her Majesty became more frequent; he advised her on every subject; he made himself acquainted with the different departments of the administration, and began to give a general superintendence over all the branches of the Government. He carried on a long correspondence on Irish affairs with the Duke of Shrewsbury, who had crossed St. George's Channel as Lord Lieutenant. He entered into all the details of the business of the Admiralty. He wrote frequently to Prior and Torcy. One of his letters on Spanish affairs occupies ten quarto pages.*

Lady Masham was to him a goddess to be assiduously worshipped, though she was not quite so beautiful as Prior's miniature Venus. In this respect, indeed, perhaps the old Duchess of Portsmouth might still be considered to have the advantage. But no arts that could flatter Lady Masham, no gratifications that could enrich her were omitted by Bolingbroke. The Marlboroughs had for years profited by Anne's indulgent partiality to acquire immense wealth; but they had at least the excuse that they rendered her great public services in return, and in rewarding them she was rewarding friends who had been attached to her from her earliest years. Lady Masham was even more mercenary than they had ever been; nothing pleased her so much as to put in her way a lucrative job; and in all such matters the Secretary was her very obedient servant. Oxford first lost and Bolingbroke first

* Bol. Corr., ii. 540.

acquired her favour by the gains he had allowed her to pocket on the expedition to Quebec; and as their friendship began it continued to the end. Nothing grieved her more than to find by Oxford's management the Queen was obliged to relinquish the share reserved to her in the Assiento Contract, which was calculated to be worth at least a hundred thousand pounds, thirty thousand of which this rapacious favourite had already looked upon as her own. This heaped up the measure of her wrath against the devoted Lord Treasurer.* Bolingbroke's influence was growing stronger every day. It was reported that the Government would no longer exhibit the weakness and indecision of the last three years. It would be seen whether, notwithstanding the reports about the Lord Treasurer seeking to court the Whigs, the enemies of the Government would be allowed to act any longer with impunity. Vigorous measures were to be adopted both in England and Ireland; and all resistance to the Queen and her administration was to be put down. Such was the language held by those who were supposed to be in the secret of affairs as the star of Bolingbroke was rising in the ascendant. Just before Christmas he came up from Windsor to London, to transact official business at Whitehall. On Wednesday the 23rd of December, previous to returning again to the queen, he sent off about eighteen letters in one day, that he might spend the Christmas undisturbed with Lady Masham and her royal mistress; and he expected to pass a pleasant fortnight with these twin objects of his idolatry, out of the sight of his hated rival, and free even from the interruption of his colleagues.

* See the Anecdotes of Oxford, Harcourt, and Bolingbroke in the Original Stuart Papers; Macpherson, ii. 533.

But his expectation of a happy Christmas was very suddenly destroyed. On arriving at Windsor again on the Christmas eve, he found that the Queen had been seized with a violent shivering, which ended in a serious attack of fever. For a fortnight she continued in a dangerous state, that was at last only relieved by a fit of the gout. The most alarming rumours were in circulation. All through the January of the new year 1714, it was given out that her life was despaired of, and that an attempt was at once to be made to set aside the succession in the House of Hanover. France was declared to be fitting out a fleet to bring over the Pretender. The Whigs, who had at first shown the most indecent joy at the news of the Queen's illness, took fright. The stocks fell; a run was made upon the Bank; there was a panic on the Exchange. It was not until the 1st of February, when the queen herself wrote to the Lord Mayor, assuring him that she was nearly recovered, and intended opening the new Parliament on the 16th, that the agitation of the public mind began to subside. This curious letter was drawn up by Bolingbroke's advice, and was countersigned with his name of Bolingbroke.

It was indeed the Crisis. A pamphlet under this title had been recently published by Steele, who had been elected member for Stockbridge, and began to act as a politician with much imprudent zeal, as though the fate of the Protestant succession depended upon himself alone. The manner in which his shilling pamphlet was received, might, indeed, have turned any man's head. Steele's production was a mere catchpenny treatise, consisting of a string of extracts from Acts of Parliament, which he had drawn up with the assistance of a lawyer of Lincoln's Inn, and a preface and commentary

by himself, not remarkable either for logic, eloquence, propriety of style, or even grammatical correctness. It was advertised for months, published by subscription, and on the day of publication a long train of Whig gentlemen and noblemen, esquires, knights, barons, viscounts, earls, and dukes, went to the publisher's shop in Little Britain to carry their copies home and transmit them by thousands into the country. The pamphlet was answered by Swift in his fierce style, under the title of The Public Spirit of the Whigs, and while ridiculing, the very reverend Dean of St. Patrick's seemed to envy the honours Steele's powerful patrons conferred on the author of The Crisis.*

But they were only the outward indications of the public excitement. The Queen evidently could not last long. The ministers by their own conduct confessed that the zealous friends of the Protestant succession had some reason for their anxiety by again sending Thomas Harley to Hanover to ask if the little Court of Herrenhausen were satisfied with the security already provided, and if not, what others they would require. This mission admitted of a double interpretation. At the time when Harley was setting out, Bolingbroke, in a letter to the Queen, was inveighing against the Whigs, and assuring her Majesty that he, at least, had nothing to do with Hanover. "Your Majesty's letter to the Lord Mayor," he observed, "was received with transports of joy, and will, I hope, put some stop to those infamous proceedings by which the Whigs have, on this occasion, shown, from the highest of them down to the lowest, what they always had at heart, ingratitude and disloyalty. I beg your Majesty's pardon for so harsh an expression, and hope it may be allowed to the

* See the first paragraph of The Public Spirit of the Whigs.

zeal of one whose life is devoted to your service, and whose views go no further than yourself."* In connection with this letter it is not without significance, that Whig officers and noblemen were being compelled to resign their commissions; that Jacobites and even Catholics were being put in the army; and that a complete remodelling of the forces was avowedly contemplated. It was agreed upon on all sides that the moment for action had come. But the dissensions at Court between Oxford and Bolingbroke were more violent than ever; men who were believed to be in their confidence like Prior, and foreign courts with whom they were supposed to have established intimate relations like that of France, knew not what to make of these quarrels. Oxford was in a strange perplexity. His conduct and intentions were a puzzle to all men; and for the best of all reasons: they were a complete puzzle to himself. Every moment he appeared on the point of making important revelations to Schutz, the Hanoverian envoy, but immediately afterwards again closely entrenched himself in his habitual reserve. Afraid to commit himself, he made some apparently sincere, but ungracious and unintelligible overtures, which, from their strangeness and indirectness, excited doubt and suspicion, and were very much worse than useless. Bolingbroke did not at this time condescend to make any professions in favour of the Court of Hanover.†

Such were the extraordinary relations of parties and statesmen when the new Parliament was opened by commission on the 16th of February. Sir Thomas Hanmer was chosen Speaker. He was patronized by the Whigs for his opposition to the treaty of com-

* Letter to the Queen, Feb. 3, 1714.

† See Hanover Papers, 1713 and 1714, *passim*.

merce, and regarded as the head of the Whimsical Tories, whose proceedings were afterwards bitterly commented upon by Bolingbroke.* They could not be counted upon; on an important division they were ready to vote at any moment with the Opposition; and from their moderation and influence with all the Tories, who were not absolute Jacobites, more dangerous to the administration than the most violent hostility of the Whigs. After the Parliament had been opened, and the Speaker chosen, the two Houses were adjourned for a fortnight. The ratifications of the treaties of peace and commerce with Spain, which had so long tried Bolingbroke's patience, were at last received. Peace with the Catholic king was proclaimed on the 1st of March; and two days later Queen Anne was carried down to Westminster in a sedan chair, and delivered a royal speech to her Parliament. The topics of her address were the peace she had just concluded, the necessity of maintaining the balance of power chiefly by the navy, and the height of malice which possessed persons who affirmed that the Protestant succession was in danger under her Government. The impoverished state of the country from the effect of war was again lamented, though it was most ungraciously, and with an absence of all royal dignity, insinuated in a parenthesis that particular men might have been gainers by it; and again, as in nearly all the speeches which the Queen delivered while Bolingbroke was in high office, the seditious licentiousness of the press was condemned, though in indecency and savageness the Tory scribblers, under the direct encouragement of Oxford and Bolingbroke, far surpassed their opponents. Swift, the best writer of the Tories, was much less restrained by considerations of delicacy

* Letter to Sir W. Windham.

and propriety, than Addison, the best writer of the Whigs. The Dean had just fiercely attacked all the Scotch peers in his Public Spirit of the Whigs. The pamphlet was brought before the House of Lords; and the ministers were obliged to join in a prosecution of the printer, and in offering a reward for the discovery of the author. Oxford solemnly protested, in his place as a peer of the realm, that he knew nothing of the pamphlet, and joined in condemning loudly the malicious insinuations it contained, while he privately sent a bill of a hundred pounds to Swift to defray the expenses of the printer's defence, and promised to send more.* Steele had brought upon himself the vengeance of the Tories from his Crisis, and his Englishman, and from the indiscreet manner in which he had pushed himself forward on the election of the Speaker; and after long debates, and a gallant defence of the Whigs, most ably led by Walpole, the zealous member for Stockbridge was expelled from the House, in which he had expected to play a great part.

This parliamentary reprobation of the two rival pamphleteers was but the opening chorus to the great political drama of the session. At an important crisis the public attention is generally fixed on the proceedings of the House of Commons. But at this particular period it was on the House of Lords, in which sat both Oxford and Bolingbroke, and where they were fearlessly confronted by the three great members of the Whig junto of William's reign, Wharton, Halifax, and Somers, that the eyes of all Englishmen, and even of foreign nations were turned. There were marvellous machinations, rapid transactions, plots and counterplots, strange

* See Oxford's Letter to Swift in a feigned hand, with the Dean's endorsement, March 14, 1714, and compare it with the Parl. Hist., vi. 1263.

motions of which none could tell the meaning. Oxford asked for leave to bring in a bill, called by himself, for the further security of the Protestant succession, and making it high treason to bring any foreign troops into the kingdom. It was pointed out, however, that to ask leave to bring in a bill was quite unnecessary, as it was one of the privileges of the peers to lay any bill on the table of their House. But was not the bill unnecessary in other respects? It was stated, indeed, to be an additional guarantee to the Protestant succession, but might it not be to weaken the securities it professed to strengthen? Might it not apply to the alleged design of the Whigs, to bring in troops to support the succession of the House of Hanover? These considerations were argued with great force by Lord Nottingham. Bolingbroke ostensibly rose to support the Lord Treasurer's motion; but he left him in a worse position than he found him. Speaking as though he had not been consulted on the business, and as though the Prime Minister and the principal Secretary of State were quite strangers to each other, "I doubt not," Bolingbroke observed, "the noble peer who made the motion means only such foreign troops as might be brought into the kingdom by the Pretender or his adherents." "Yes," said Oxford, eagerly adopting the explanation offered for him, "that is my meaning." Then it was immediately replied, the bill is doubly unnecessary. Such troops, if foreigners, might at once be dealt with as enemies, and if natives as rebels. The motion was allowed to fall to the ground; no bill on the subject was ever brought in; and what Oxford really did mean, remained and still remains a mystery to all mankind. The most charitable supposition was, that he had no meaning at all.*

* Parl. Hist., vi. 1330.

Those who gave credit to Oxford for profound designs, and they were many, might, however, well be alarmed at such a proceeding, and ask each other what was coming next. The unfortunate situation of the Catalans, given up to their enemy by the British ministry, blended the sense of insecurity with indignation. On this question Bolingbroke himself was strongly attacked, and his defence was singularly weak. He argued that the engagements we entered into concerning the Catalans was made with Charles, who had become Emperor. They could not be expected to bind Philip, who had never been acknowledged King of Spain. All that England could do, was to employ her good offices in their behalf. Remembering what a commanding position England had been in when the negotiations for peace were begun, many of the Lords exclaimed, after the Secretary of State had sat down, that surely more effectual means for the support of these poor people than mere good officers had been placed by Providence in her Majesty's hands. The good offices, indeed, which her Majesty did employ in behalf of the Catalans were to aid the Spanish king with a squadron of ships to reduce their capital city. But Bolingbroke was so far influenced by the remonstrances of the peers that he sent off new instructions to Sir James Wishart not to appear before Barcelona until he received further orders. The admiral, however, interfered sufficiently as to justify the Catalans in hanging the Queen's solemn promise of protection on the high altar of the cathedral as an appeal to Heaven against the faithlessness of a British Government.

The person by whom this unhappy business of the Catalans was settled for Bolingbroke, was a Jacobite

* See Revolt des Catalans, in Tindal, and The Case of the Catalans as represented in the Report of the Committee of Secrecy, June, 1715.

emissary, Sir Patrick Lawless. He was an Irishman by birth, and a Catholic by religion; he had borne arms for James II. in Ireland, had followed his royal master into exile, had fought against England during the Spanish war, and had come over nominally as a Spanish envoy to regulate the treaty of commerce. The reception of this man at the Court, more than perhaps any other single circumstance, convinced the great majority of the people at this time that the Queen and her ministers, and particularly Bolingbroke himself, were in the interests of the Pretender. Nor can this permission to allow Lawless, who was an exiled subject of the British crown, to remain here as the accredited agent of another power, be justified on any pretence. It was clearly contrary to the express laws of the realm. Lawless was liable to be apprehended as a traitor to the Government which received him, and he could not put off his allegiance at pleasure, and clothe himself with the privileged immunities of a foreign envoy. His residence in London at this crisis was extremely annoying and irritating to all who wished well to the succession of the House of Hanover. At last the Lords interfered. They addressed her Majesty to issue a proclamation against Jesuits, Papists, and all who had borne arms against King William, Queen Mary, and herself; and they passed two resolutions, that no person who had not been included in the articles of the Treaty of Limerick, and had been in the French and Spanish service during the war, should be capable of any civil or military employment in England, and that no person who was a natural-born subject of the queen should be admitted as a public minister of any foreign power. To these resolutions little objection can be taken. Lawless was obliged to bend to the storm which

his presence created. Bolingbroke requested him to pretend that he had received orders from Spain to repair to Holland, and advised him at once to leave this country; and the English Secretary of State had to make the best excuse he could to the Court of Spain. All this, however, Bolingbroke did with great reluctance, and with many lamentations at the perversity of the English people. Through the confidential letters both of Prior and himself at this time may be traced an undisguised admiration of the smoothness with which affairs were transacted in the despotic Court of Louis XIV., and an equally undisguised vexation at the difficulties and annoyances with which the servants of the Crown were beset in the constitutional Government of England.*

Just at the close of the last session the Lords had addressed the Crown, to see the Pretender removed from Lorraine. Bolingbroke had, however, taken no steps to carry out the promise her Majesty had returned until December, and then he betrayed considerable unwillingness to make any remonstrances on the subject. He indeed went so far as to privately suggest to the Duke of Lorraine how the public representations could be eluded which he was obliged officially to make. This disingenuous proceeding has been stigmatized by a very moderate historian as almost incredible baseness on the part of Bolingbroke.† But this is perhaps too harsh a judgment. The fact is, that the Lords and Commons were on this point extremely unreasonable. The address for the removal of the Pretender from Lorraine was a party manœuvre of the Whigs for

* See Bolingbroke's Letters to the Princess Ursini, of April 23, 1714; to the Marquis de Montéleon, of April 27, 1714; to Prior, of Feb. 16, 1714; and Prior's Reply, of March 12, 1714.

† Lord Mahon, in his History of England, i. 53. Lib. edit.

the purpose of putting the ministers in difficulties. Bolingbroke had not ventured openly to oppose it; but he might doubt whether he could be expected to act literally upon it. As Torcy very properly asked, Where was the unfortunate young man to go? He had been driven out of France; he had taken up his abode in Lorraine: but if he was to be expelled from country after country, what was to be done? It does not appear that he was more formidable in Lorraine than he could be in many other places; and surely a petty persecution of obliging him to fly from shelter to shelter in order to drive him beyond the Alps, was scarcely worthy of an English Government. Another great outcry was, however, raised this session, because the address to the throne had not been followed up, and because the Duke of Lorraine still afforded to the heir of the Stuarts the hospitality of Bar-le-duc. A forged letter from the duke to Queen Anne was shown about, in which he was represented as declining to remove the Pretender from his dominions, and praising him for the noblest princely virtues. Sunderland and Halifax declared that the Duke of Lorraine's minister had informed them that no steps had been taken to carry out the promise given by the Queen. "Baron Fostner, the Duke of Lorraine's minister, could have made no such declaration," replied Bolingbroke. "I have myself made those instances to the baron, in the Queen's name." A committee was formed to inquire into the truth of the conflicting statements made by Bolingbroke and the Whig peers; but the enemies of the Secretary did not find what they hoped to discover.*

These debates led to the great question of the session, and of the time—the alleged danger of the Protestant

* Parl. Hist., vi., 1334.

succession. The subject was first discussed in the House of Lords, and was afterwards taken up by the House of Commons. In both Houses it gave rise to the most animated debates, with similar results. In both, the Whimsical Tories, with Lord Anglesea and Sir Thomas Hanmer, joined the Whigs, and voted against the Government. In both the Succession was voted out of danger, and the ministers triumphed, but with diminished majorities. This victory was generally regarded as merely nominal; but Bolingbroke was of another opinion. What the ministerial ranks lost in numbers, he thought, they gained in steadiness; and he spoke of the two great party divisions with much outward satisfaction.*

But was the Protestant succession really in danger? Was there any formed design of the ministers as a body, was there any private scheme of Bolingbroke himself, to set aside the Act of Settlement, and restore the House of Stuart? This is the great historical problem of that age; it is imperative in any biographer of Bolingbroke to attempt some explanation of this mystery: through the four years he was Secretary of State it forces itself upon our attention. At the critical period of his life to which we have now arrived, it cannot be dismissed without deliberate examination. On a correct interpretation of his conduct on this question depends the whole complexion of Bolingbroke's political career. By the Whigs of his own day he was accused of being engaged in a systematic conspiracy to place the Pretender on the throne, after the death of the Queen. Well-informed persons of later times, like Walter Scott, not at all unfavourable to the Stuarts, have also affirmed that the designs of Oxford and Bolingbroke were "deep

* Letter to the Earl of Strafford.

and dangerous;"* while, on the other hand, a biographer of Bolingbroke has sought to represent him as a misunderstood but most devoted martyr to his attachment to the House of Hanover.† It is necessary to determine fully how far the general opinion of Bolingbroke's contemporaries was correct, and how far the confident though most contradictory statements of recent writers can be justified by facts. Such an inquiry is in a certain degree retrospective: but it is only in this manner that any just conclusion can be drawn.

The question whether the ministers in a body acted together on any concerted plan to restore the Stuarts may be answered at the outset. We have only to consider the terms on which they were with each other. Most certainly Oxford and Bolingbroke never co-operated with any such view. There was a misunderstanding between them at the time that St. John entered office. Very early he began to complain of the mysteries and reserves of the Treasurer; and they had not been six months in the Government together before they were almost openly at variance. Men engaged in traitorous conspiracies must have some confidence in each other; but Harley and St. John, almost from the beginning of their ministry, thoroughly distrusted each other. As it was with these two chiefs, so it cannot but have been with their colleagues. Never was there among them those intimate relations and correspondence which must have been established if they had been united in one great and zealous combination to put the son of James II. on the throne. After all the official and private letters of that time have been sifted and scruti-

* Scott's edition of Swift; note to the Enquiry into the Conduct of Queen Anne's Last Ministry.

† Cooke.

nized to the utmost, no evidence of any general and deliberate design has been discovered.

The evidence goes the other way. If there had been such a plot, it must have been known to the French minister. The Marquis de Torcy, whatever may have been his faults and prejudices, was certainly not a man capable of writing a deliberate falsehood. He distinctly and expressly states in his Memoirs, written many years after the events to which they related, and when he had no interest in concealing the truth, that the English ministers never spoke to his Government about the Pretender at all, except to insist upon his removal from France at the conclusion of the peace.

That private communications passed between the different ministers and the Jacobite agents is of course unquestionable. The difficult point to determine is, how far these overtures were sincere. Both Marlborough and Godolphin had a similar correspondence, even to the last, with the Jacobites; but no person can doubt that these two wary politicians only thought of providing for themselves amid the uncertainties of the time a way of retreat under all circumstances, and that they had not the slightest intention of doing anything to bring about the restoration of the House of Stuart. Even after Godolphin's fall from power, we find him regretting to one of the Pretender's emissaries that he had not been able to give effect to his inclinations in the cause;* and Marlborough, even when he was urging the Elector of Hanover to send his son over to England, was preparing to draw the sword for the House of Hanover, had the Elector's commission in his pocket as commander of the forces, and even appeared to give that most unquestionable pledge of his sincerity,

* Stuart Papers: Macpherson.

the loan of twenty thousand pounds, to be used for the Elector's purposes in England, still with a grave face, and many solemn oaths, acted the part of a family adviser to the Stuarts.* When men so deeply committed to the cause of the Protestant succession kept up such relations with the Jacobites, it is not wonderful that Oxford and Bolingbroke played the same game, and with, as there is every reason to believe, almost as little sincerity. During the first two years of their ministry, Bolingbroke was comparatively powerless; all court favour and ministerial power were concentrated in the person of the Prime Minister. Had the Secretary of State been even disposed to do all he could for the Stuarts, during most of his tenure of office he could not have done much. It was to the conduct of Oxford that, throughout these four years, they looked with the most anxiety; and though the Jacobite agents in general were the most credulous of mankind, they were obliged to confess that the minister's intentions were to the last a mystery. He was a dark man. His professions of one day were contradicted by his acts of the next. When Gaultier first went over to France with the overtures of the British ministry for peace in the December of 1710, he communicated to the Duke of Berwick a proposal, ostensibly from Harley, to the effect that if the Jacobites would support the Court, a plan might be arranged, at the conclusion of the peace, to bring about the restoration of the Stuarts on the death of the Queen. The Jacobites eagerly accepted the proposal. They gave orders for their English adherents in Parliament to support the Government, and to fall in readily with all the measures of the ministers. The Treasurer, however, as his nature was, after having

* Stuart Papers, Tunstal to Middleton, Oct. $\frac{16}{27}$, 1713.

once opened his mind as to his professed intentions, became more reserved than ever. As long as the war continued, he put off everything until the peace. The peace was at last made; but no plan was ever sent over from Oxford to St. Germains or Barleduc.* The truth was, that he had a great contempt for the Stuarts, and was in his heart decidedly averse to their cause, but that, being doubtful of the intentions of the Queen under the influence of Lady Masham, and half of his own supporters being Jacobites, he was obliged to keep them quiet with promises, which he never intended to perform. If by the mere will of his own he could have put the Pretender on the throne, there is no reason to suppose that this act of volition would ever have been performed.

After the February of 1711, Oxford and Bolingbroke were never on such terms of confidence and intimacy as even to consult each other about the Pretender, much less to concert measures together to bring about the restoration of the Stuarts. Whatever their plans may have been, they certainly never were, nor from the relations between these two statesmen could have been, communicated to each other. The first glimpse we have of the Secretary of State in direct communication with the agents of the Stuarts, is in the very apocryphal Minutes of Mesnager's Negotiations. This work was published in 1717, and professed to be a translation from the French, of which no original exists, or has ever existed. Bolingbroke is there represented as discussing with Mesnager, after the preliminaries of peace had been signed, the manner in which the French King was to be privately released by the Queen of England from the obligations he had taken to acknow-

* See Mémoires du Duc de Berwick, written by himself, and the Lockhart Papers, i. 368.

ledge the succession in the House of Hanover. Mesnager is shown as suggesting a secret article, which, however, the English Secretary of State doubted whether her Majesty would sign, but thought that she might make a declaration by word of mouth as to the manner in which that provision of the treaty was to be understood. Bolingbroke, it is then alleged, after consulting the Queen, introduced Mesnager to Lady Masham, that he might from her learn his royal mistress's intentions, declaring, at the same time, that he did not wish to have anything more to do with the business. Lady Masham, however, and the French plenipotentiary agreed upon two points. The one was that the King of France, to give satisfaction to the people and the allies, should acknowledge the succession in the House of Hanover; the other, that this agreement should not bind him after the Queen's death, to refrain from attempting to place her brother on the British throne.*

No person familiar with the history of the negotiations which ended in the peace of Utrecht, can believe for one moment that this important affair was ever treated in the manner there represented. The obligation to acknowledge the House of Hanover formed one of the preliminaries actually signed by Mesnager, and agreed to in the conferences with the ministers, when the scrupulous Shrewsbury was present. It was not a question afterwards introduced and settled by Lady Masham. Neither Queen Anne nor her Secretary of State would at that time have condescended to discuss this subject with a French envoy, much less to make terms with him respecting the inheritance of the Crown. It is very possible, however, that Mesnager may afterwards have privately spoken to Bolingbroke

* See Minutes of Monsieur Mesnager's Negotiations, 282.

as to what the King of France was to do in the event of the Act of Settlement being set aside; that the Secretary of State may have introduced him to Lady Masham; and that this favourite may at once have thought fit to give assurance in the Queen's name, with which Anne herself would have been anything but satisfied. For the Protestant succession, the honour of the crown, the faith of treaties, and the liberties and independence of the English people, were nothing to a woman like Lady Masham. Knowing that she could expect nothing from the House of Hanover, she would gladly have done anything to serve the House of Stuart. The Queen, however, cold, suspicious, and jealous, both of the Pretender and the Elector, was not easily managed; and it was only by occasional hints and by humouring her prejudices, that the unprepossessing favourite could allude to the subject at all.*

Even throughout the whole of the negotiations on the Pretender's change of residence, Bolingbroke carefully avoided committing himself in writing. He referred Torcy always to Gaultier, but was not at all disposed to put his neck in Gaultier's power; and once declined, in the most peremptory manner, and under the threat of sending Gaultier out of the kingdom, to receive a letter from the Pretender sealed with the royal arms, and left on the table by this cunning priest.† It is also remarkable that Torcy distrusted the Jacobites almost as much as Bolingbroke; over and over again they complained that the French minister would not listen to

* It will be seen that though the account of Mesnager's negotiations may be generally fictitious, I am not disposed to reject the work altogether. The author, whom Mr. Hallam thought to be Defoe, had some information on the subject. I cannot believe the letter quoted at page 313 from Lady Masham to be a pure forgery.

† See Marchmont Papers, note, ii. 241.

any of their allegations; and the acknowledgment of the Protestant succession in the Treaty of Utrecht, awoke their keenest indignation.* This could never have been had they thought for one moment that there was an implied understanding between the French and English Governments to set it aside. And can we believe that such an understanding could have been come to without the Pretender or his minister, the Earl of Middleton, being informed on a point of such importance?

Oxford himself first began to suspect Bolingbroke of having established relations with the Jacobites from the time of his visit to France. But Oxford's suspicions, unless they can be supported by other testimony, are the poorest of all foundations for any historical assumption. The questionable assertion of Sir James Mackintosh about the interviews Bolingbroke was said to have had at that time with the Pretender, can be met, as I have already shown, with the most positive contradiction. It is, however, undoubtedly true that Bolingbroke then came to an arrangement with Torcy to pay fifty thousand pounds to the dowager Queen, as part of the jointure which had so long been withheld. But the advocacy of this claim was a point of honour with the French Government; it was one of the conditions on which Torcy and his master strongly insisted; and in partly yielding to it, and coming to a private understanding to pay over the fifty thousand pounds, the English Secretary made a compromise which he might think himself fully justified in agreeing to, without in any respect rendering himself more liable to Jacobite imputations than King William in virtually admitting the payment of the jointure to Mary of Modena, as one of the conditions of the peace of Ryswick. The one was

* See Stuart Papers; Macpherson, 1713.

indeed a public agreement, and the other a mere private understanding; but the change in the circumstances of the times renders this difference at least excusable. Most certainly it can never fairly be considered one of Bolingbroke's crimes.

At the beginning of the year 1713, we see the Secretary of State for the first time in undoubted communication with the Jacobites. On this there is no mistake. He talked long and unreservedly with the indefatigable Lockhart of Carnworth, whom he impressed with a belief of his sincerity, but to whom he also hinted his suspicions that the Lord Treasurer had not the same good intentions towards the Stuarts.* But Bolingbroke and Oxford were then on very bad terms. Lockhart was one of the most eminent members of the Jacobite party, and had the greatest influence with the Jacobite members of the House of Commons. The Secretary of State may have thought it a clever policy to appear attached to their cause, and to increase their suspicions of the reserve and hesitation of the prime minister, without being himself any more devoted to the Stuarts than he had ever previously been. It suited his purpose to speak their language, and seem to adopt their sentiments; but it does not follow that he had become any more himself a Jacobite, or was prepared to put his own life and fortune to hazard for the sake of the Pretender.

It would be as erroneous to believe him really zealous for the House of Hanover. He had read English history, and knew something of human character. The great stumbling-block of himself and the Tory country gentlemen to adopting the cause of the Pretender was his religion. Could this have been removed, Bolingbroke would, without scruple, hesitation, or fear have

* See the Stuart Papers; Macpherson, ii. 366.

thrown the country into James's hands. But the minister knew well enough that as long as the Chevalier professed the Roman Catholic religion, persons of his own persuasion must ever have a paramount influence over his mind. It was absurd to make promises, and to talk of the solemn obligations of gratitude. The Pretender could not make promises more earnestly than his father James II. had done to preserve all the rights and privileges of the Church of England, or be under deeper obligations of gratitude than James II. had been to those who had so strenuously supported his pretensions to the crown in the great battle of the Exclusion Bill. Yet all these had been disregarded. His ablest ministers, his nearest relations, Halifax and Rochester, had been dismissed; and all the highest honours of the state had been given to men whose only claim was the most unscrupulous subserviency and a profession of the Roman Catholic faith. This experiment had surely been sufficient. Bolingbroke and his friends then insisted on the Pretender's embracing the religion of the Church of England; and for some time they believed this representation would have effect. It seemed scarcely likely that a young man could resist such a temptation. Had he yielded, Bolingbroke's course would have been easy. The spirit of the Act of Settlement would have been set against the letter. As long as the Protestant succession was preserved, what necessity was there to insist on seeing it carried out in the House of Hanover? The principles of the Tories, and of the Church of England all recommended a preference for a son of James II. to the members of a German family, whose kinship was much more distant, and who were supposed to be in league with Whigs, dissenters, and the Dutch. Nor was it imperative, according to this scheme, to repeal

openly the Act of Settlement. The Tories, when thoroughly masters of all the strongholds of the Government, might take, on this question, what course they pleased; it was not necessary to excite alarm before the moment for action came: if the Chevalier were once in England, and ready to declare that he had adopted the established religion, the provisions of the Act of Settlement might be treated as of no account. Queen Elizabeth had succeeded to the English crown in defiance of an Act of Parliament by which she had been disinherited, and branded as illegitimate. From the manner in which Bolingbroke afterwards dwelt on this memorable precedent, it is evident that it had made a great impression upon his mind; and that he had not been disinclined to think what had been done before might be done again.* It was necessary, however, to secure the troops, to have them commanded by officers who were not under the influence of Marlborough, and to have the important fortresses of the kingdom placed in safe hands. Hence, notwithstanding Oxford's undisguised reluctance and delays, the plan for remodelling the army was pushed forward; Ormond was made Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, and, unknown to the Lord Treasurer, was in correspondence with the Marshal Berwick; the towns of Berwick and Edinburgh were placed under the control of persons devoted to the Jacobite cause; and it was sought to induce the Whig Earl of Dorset to give up the governorship of Dover Castle.†

The dangerous illness of the Queen at the beginning of the year 1714 gave consistency and urgency to the

* See his Letters on the Study of History.

† See the Mémoires du Maréchal de Berwick; and Horace Walpole's Letter to Mann, Collected Correspondence, May 17, 1749.

design. It was evident that she had but a few months to live; what was to be done must be done at once. Bolingbroke and Lady Masham took care to let the Queen know how the Whigs had rejoiced at the prospect of her death. Indignation at this intelligence removed some of the scruples from the Queen's feeble mind; and from the period of her convalescence she became herself a party to the plot. Still her belief in the Church of England was the great conviction of her life; and nothing would ever have induced her to countenance any project that might have placed a Catholic on the throne. But the Queen's more favourable inclination towards her brother appears to have compelled Oxford, in one of his last efforts to keep his place, seemingly to acquiesce in his rival's scheme. Gaultier wrote a letter to the Pretender,* professedly at the Lord Treasurer's dictation, telling the prince that if he ever hoped to succeed to the throne, it would be necessary for him to change, or at least to dissemble his religion, and that the Queen would do nothing for him while he remained a member of the Church of Rome. It is not necessary to believe explicitly the priest's letter as to the real sentiments or intentions of Oxford; but it is evident that if the Pretender would, in the February of this year, have professed himself a convert to the Church of England, the Queen, Lady Masham, Bolingbroke, and the great majority of the Tory party would have co-operated together to bring about his succession to the Crown.

Such apprehensions greatly disturbed the Court of Hanover.† The Elector's little circle could scarcely believe that such a temptation could be resisted; and

* Gaultier to the Pretender, $\frac{\text{Feb. } 6}{\text{Jan. } 27}$, 1714.

† See Hanover Papers, 1713, *passim*.

they wrote to the Hanoverian envoy in England to consult Halifax and Somers as to the best means of providing against the danger. Bolingbroke was apparently even more confident that the Pretender would prefer a Crown to the privilege of going to public mass; for the dictates of religion had so little influence on the mind of the Secretary of State that he was quite unable to make any allowance for their influence upon the minds of others. Nevertheless, the son of James II. rejected the lure that was so perseveringly held out. He wrote a spirited and not ill-expressed letter in reply, positively declining to change, or even to tamper with his religion. Such firmness, he declared, ought to recommend him to the English people, and be an additional reason for their having confidence in him; for how could they trust any promise he might make if he thus lightly gave up the deliberate conviction of his life?* This composition was very creditable to the young man, who wrote much better than many of his advisers; but it would have been more prudent in him to have followed the advice of the Duke of Berwick, and have said nothing at all.†

The letter was soon in the hands of the Jacobites' agents in London. It was shown to Bolingbroke, and by him communicated to several of his friends. He afterwards declared that the subject of religion was so awkwardly handled in it that it made him and those whom he consulted at once resolve to have nothing more to do with the Pretender or his cause.‡ But this was said when Bolingbroke had quarrelled with

* The letter is dated March $\frac{13}{2}$, 1714: it may be found among the Stuart Papers; Macpherson, ii. 525.

† The Duke of Berwick to James, March $\frac{28}{17}$, 1714.

‡ Letter to Sir W. Windham.

James and the Jacobites, and was desirous of representing them in the most despicable light possible. He was, doubtless, very angry for the moment at the firmness which the young Pretender displayed; he was so full of his own ministerial greatness, and so confident in his abilities, that he could not bear either the Elector of Hanover or the son of James II. to have a will or an opinion of his own; and there is no doubt that at this time the truest picture of Bolingbroke's state of mind will be found drawn by himself in a moment of unguarded frankness:—"As to what might happen afterwards, on the death of the queen, to speak truly, none of us had any very settled resolution."* These words have, perhaps, deserved more attention than they have received. They help greatly to clear up the mystery. They are at all events conclusive that Bolingbroke, according to his own statement, had no very settled resolution to bring in the House of Hanover. The distrust which the Elector felt of him was perfectly justifiable; his own words, his own acts, were directly against any formed design of carrying out the Act of Settlement. But was it indeed a truth that after perusing the Pretender's letter the Secretary abandoned all intentions of seating him on the throne without the indispensable guarantee of a change of religion? From the manner in which Bolingbroke did afterwards throw himself into the hands of the Jacobites, when no alteration in this respect had been made in James's sentiments or conduct, it can scarcely be believed that this objection to embrace the Pretender's cause would have remained insurmountable. There is evidence to the contrary. It appeared that very soon after Bolingbroke had been so annoyed at this unfortu-

* Letter to Sir W. Windham.

nate letter, his resolution to have nothing more to do with the Pretender had begun to give way.*

Such then, after a careful deduction from facts and consideration of circumstances, were the sentiments of Bolingbroke on this momentous question. It is idle to say the Protestant succession was in no danger. It is worse than idle, it is simply ridiculous to represent him as a real friend of the succession in the House of Hanover. Neither had he, until the Queen's death was imminent, fully made up his mind to bring in the Pretender. He showed no attachment to one cause more than to the other; but still sought to reserve to himself the power of dealing with the question according to what he thought might best suit the interests of his party, that is, of himself. There was nothing high-minded in this policy. There was nothing in it of the old Cavalier sentiment of devotion to Church and King. It was Toryism with all the exalted principle of Toryism taken out; a mere negation of Whiggism; a system of watching events, in the hope of profiting by them, when to direct them properly it was necessary to come to some decided resolution, and make circumstances bend to the occasion.

Bolingbroke was with justice regarded both by Hanoverians and Jacobites as the author of all the violent measures adopted at this time. It may, however, be

* "St. Germains, $\frac{\text{May } 6}{\text{April } 25}$, 1714.

"M. Talon (Torcy) has had letters from Jeannot (Sherville) and Waters (Gaultier), which he intends to send unto M. Rancourt (James) by a messenger on purpose; so I shall only hint here, that for all M. Waters (Gaultier) formerly assured Oleron (Oxford) and Lablé (Bolingbroke) would never hearken, unless Rancourt (James) made up with Roland (became a Protestant), he now writes word that both these gentlemen have assured him that after Albert (Anne) they will never serve nor have another master but Mr. Robinson (James)."—Letter of the Duke of Berwick to James, of $\frac{\text{May } 6}{\text{April } 25}$, 1714, among the unedited Stuart Papers.

doubted whether they were wisely taken. They roused the suspicions of the Court of Hanover to the highest degree; they irritated the Whigs almost to fury; but they neither broke their strength nor subdued their spirit.

If Bolingbroke had really meant well to the Court of Hanover, never certainly were measures so extraordinary as those which he took. The Protestant succession had scarcely been voted out of danger by small parliamentary majorities when a new question arose. By the advice of Halifax, Schutz, the Hanoverian envoy, went to the Lord Chancellor and demanded the writ of Prince George's to sit in Parliament as Duke of Cambridge. Harcourt blushed, hesitated, and without refusing to deliver the document, said that he must first consult the Queen before allowing it to go out of his hands. A cabinet council was immediately held. The writ was sent to Schutz's residence; but it was considered that by asking for the parchment without previously informing her Majesty of his intention, he had treated her with gross disrespect. Schutz, after disregarding an intimation that his appearance in the Queen's presence would not be welcome, was peremptorily forbidden the Court by Bolingbroke, and Oxford's cousin, Mr. Thomas Harley, was ordered immediately to demand the envoy's recall. Schutz, however, anticipated the order by immediately setting off for Hanover. The account he gave to the Elector of the proceedings of the English Government could scarcely be expected to be very complimentary to Bolingbroke, who was known to be the principal adviser of this very decided step. In the cabinet council on the demand of the writ for the Duke of Cambridge, Oxford and several other ministers advised that Prince George should be invited over. Had the Government really been desirous of

quieting the alarms which prevailed, and of giving satisfaction to the Court of Hanover, this would undoubtedly have been the best course to pursue. It was, however, most decidedly opposed by Bolingbroke, and was known to be most disagreeable to the Queen. Anne might be excused, like Queen Elizabeth, for not wishing to behold her own tombstone in the person of a successor. But there are times when even such feelings in sovereigns must yield to considerations of public welfare; and these times it is the especial duty of a statesman in the highest confidence of the crown to take the opportunity of pointing out. There was no analogy between the state of England in the last year of Queen Elizabeth's reign and that in the last year of Queen Anne. James I. was at least the undisputed heir on the death of Elizabeth. There was no other pretender to the crown supported by France, by a powerful party in England, and, as was suspected, by many of the Queen's ministers, and even by the Queen herself. Nor can the Whigs be fairly accused of inconsistency in voting against calling over the Duke of Cambridge, in 1705, and so clamorously demanding that he should be summoned in 1714. In 1705 the Protestant succession was not in immediate danger. The Queen's health was then good; Marlborough and Godolphin were not supposed to be acting in concert with a Catholic Pretender to the Crown; it was not a question of weeks or days as to whether the crisis of the succession might not occur. Precautions which were not at all necessary at the earlier period became almost indispensable for security during the last year of the Queen. But any precautions of this kind were stubbornly resisted by Bolingbroke in the name of the sovereign; it was his conduct which kept this question open to the last, so

that it seemed, even to the closest observers, that at the death of Anne there would be a mere race for the crown between the Elector and the Pretender, and that he who arrived the first would certainly be King.*

Swift afterwards remarked to Bolingbroke that he had always thought there was a great neglect in the ministers not at this time endeavouring to come to some good understanding with the Elector. But it was the fault of Bolingbroke himself that he took no pains while these precious moments were slipping away to make the House of Hanover believe him to be their friend, and yet he affected afterwards to be surprised and indignant because they looked upon him as their enemy. All his proceedings had the same bearing. It seems strange that no person of any weight or character could be found to represent the Government at Herrenhausen. Oxford's cousin, Thomas Harley, returned again at this time to London. Lord Clarendon, the most stupid nobleman in the whole roll of English peers, was chosen for the delicate office of conveying her Majesty's expressions of indignation at the manner in which the writ for the Duke of Cambridge had been demanded of the Lord Chancellor, and earnestly to remonstrate against the young man being sent over to England without the Queen's consent, which, of course, there was no likelihood of her giving. The appointment of Lord Clarendon, instead of Lord Paget, who had been previously fixed upon, was regarded as an undoubted proof that Bolingbroke's influence at Court was superior to Oxford's. The choice of a representative who might be supposed agreeable at Hanover was never thought of for one moment; and as everybody laughed at Lord Clarendon

* See Hanover Papers; Martines to Robethon, Feb. 19, N. S., 1714.

who, when Governor of Pennsylvania, dressed himself up as a woman, the more fully to represent his female sovereign, the letter which he carried with him from the queen to the Elector, beginning, "My experience of the Earl of Clarendon's capacity determined me to send him to your Court," could only be construed into a very good joke.*

The Princess Sophia had just died very suddenly, and her son the Elector, now stood, according to the Act of Settlement, the heir to the British crown. As a compliment to him, it was proposed in the House of Commons to pay all the arrears due to the Hanoverian troops which had been withheld with those of the other allies after their refusal to follow the Duke of Ormond. This motion had the sanction of the auditor Harley, and it was ordered to be reported to the House. No sooner, however, did Bolingbroke hear of the proposition than he used all his influence to defeat it. Here again, he said, the Queen was treated with disrespect. As it had been by her Majesty's orders that the money had not been paid, so it was only after her personal recommendation that it ought to be voted by the House of Commons. In spite of the Whigs, Bolingbroke succeeded in getting the question laid aside, without being positively rejected.†

It was not, however, the Court of Hanover only that felt at this time the effect of Bolingbroke's angry ascendancy in the councils of his sovereign. The Protestant dissenters in England were treated with as little ceremony. No single act on his part ever excited greater hopes among the Jacobites, or keener indigna-

* Hanover Papers; Bothmar to Robethon, June 16, 1714; Queen Anne to the Elector, June 19, 1714.

† See Bolingbroke's own version of this affair in his Letter to the Earl of Strafford, May 18, 1714.

tion on the part of those who were attached to the principles of the Revolution, than his conduct in relation to what was called the Schism Bill, drawn up by himself, and brought in by his friend Sir William Windham into the House of Commons. This measure was thoroughly imbued with Bolingbroke's daring and unscrupulous spirit. It shows us from what kind of legislation England escaped by the fall of this minister from power. He boldly proposed to do nothing less than to take the education of their children out of the hands of the dissenters, and intrust it to schoolmasters licensed by the bishop. No licence was to be granted except to persons who had received the sacrament according to the forms of the Church of England, and who had during the past year taken the oaths of allegiance and supremacy. A neglect in complying with these arbitrary regulations exposed the offender to imprisonment without bail; and the law was to be enforced by the justices of the peace, who, being generally country gentlemen, members of the October Club, and bigoted Tories, had, of course, the conscientious Nonconformists of all denominations subjected to their tender mercies. This was legislating with a vengeance. This was what Bolingbroke called one of his strong measures for keeping no terms with his opponents, and of showing a determined front; and it would have gratified Strafford in the days when he called out for Thorough. It is impossible to say anything in defence of a statesman who sought in such a manner to tyrannize over his fellow-subjects. After the Restoration, when Clarendon forgot the solemn promises his master had given, and abandoned the Puritans to the vindictive loyalty of the Cavaliers, he had at least the excuse of sincere devotion to the Church of England, and of much

suffering in her cause. But Bolingbroke knew himself to be a disbeliever in all revealed religion, when he thus shamefully set himself to persecute, in the name of the establishment, men who were at heart much less dissenters than himself. The fact was, that the struggle between the Secretary of State and the Lord Treasurer was not yet over; and Bolingbroke thought it a masterstroke of policy to acquire to himself the hearty allegiance of the extreme Tories and Jacobites, or oblige Oxford to break entirely with the dissenters and the moderate party. The Prime Minister was placed between the two horns of a dilemma. Notwithstanding all that he had done for the Tories, the old associations still clung to him, and the dissenters scarcely regarded him as their enemy. But if he supported the Schism Act, he would lose their allegiance for ever; if he opposed it, he would ruin himself with the Court and the country gentlemen, and Bolingbroke would become undisputed chief of the Tory party and the Government. Thus did this unscrupulous statesman play with the most cherished parental rights and the dearest principles of public freedom and natural justice, as though they were mere counters in the miserable game of his ambition.

In spite of the strongest opposition of the Whigs, headed by Walpole, Lechmere, and Stanhope, the bill passed the House of Commons. It was introduced into the House of Lords by Bolingbroke himself, who took charge of it and defended it through every stage. On moving the second reading, he made a speech which those who knew what his real sentiments on the tenets of the Church of England were, and how far his life was spent in conformity with the precepts of that church, and of all other Christian churches, could scarcely listen to with grave faces. The bill, he said, was of the greatest import-

ance. It concerned the Church of England, which was the great support of the monarchy. It concerned all good men; for they were all interested in supporting both the church and monarchy. And it particularly concerned that august assembly, which deriving its lustre from the throne, and being nearest to the throne, ought to have the interests both of the church and monarchy most at heart.* Bolingbroke was answered by Cowper in a most masterly speech. All the Whig peers strenuously resisted the bill. Nottingham alluded in the most direct manner to Swift, who, with the patronage of Bolingbroke, was supposed to be in a fair way to obtain a bishopric, and yet was suspected of scarcely being a Christian. But the fiercest attack on the ministers and the measure was made by Wharton. Profligate as Wharton was, he could at least assume an immeasurable superiority over men whose lives were as licentious as his, who had, like himself, been brought up in families supposed to be attached to the Presbyterian form of worship, and yet put themselves forward as pious champions of the Church of England, endeavoured to violate all the traditions of their households, and to take away from the dissenters the education of their own children. Bolingbroke, Harcourt, and Oxford, all lay under these same imputations of early Presbyterianism; and they all felt the stinging force of Wharton's sarcasms on their conduct. This man had some great oratorical powers. His ridicule was merciless; and certainly the leading patrons of such a scheme deserved no mercy.

Oxford was in a sad state of perplexity. In his heart he thoroughly disapproved of the bill, and knew well the object for which it had been framed; but being still

* Parl. Hist., vi. 1351.

nominally the head of the Government, and the leader of the Tories, he could not bring himself to act with manly resolution against this unprincipled measure. He managed, as usual, awkwardly to offend both parties: he indicated clearly that he disliked the bill, and that dissension existed in the ministerial ranks, by saying that he had not yet considered what course he should take on the question, but that when he had done so he would act as he thought best for the country; and with these stammering and confused observations he voted for the second reading. The dissenters petitioned to be heard by counsel against the measure; their prayer was rejected, Oxford leaving the House before the division, but some of his friends voted in the Whig minority of sixty-six. In violation of every sound principle of legislation which had been established by the Revolution, the bill became law, with one most extraordinary amendment, excepting the tutors of noblemen from all the provisions, except that of taking out a licence from the bishop. It was to come into effect on the 1st of August, a memorable day, on which, however, as the Greeks would have said, by fate, and pious Christians by divine interposition, at one blow all the ambitious schemes of Bolingbroke were confounded, and his career as a statesman destroyed.

But for the time the Schism Act answered its purpose. Oxford had been made to appear more obnoxious than ever to many of his former supporters. Never was a first minister in a more wretched plight. His state was indeed pitiable, if he had been a fitting object of pity. But in justice he was entitled to no commiseration. He only found the same weapons which, for the most purely personal ends, he had used against Godolphin and Marlborough turned against

himself by his former disciple. It was right that he who had risen by intrigue and influence of the back stairs should fall by intrigue and influence of the back stairs. It was right that the hand which had raised him up should pull him down. To Lady Masham and cunning manœuvres he owed everything; by Lady Masham and the more cunning manœuvres of a rival in her favour he lost everything. It is impossible, however, not to feel some indignation at the manner in which the low-minded Abigail treated the object of her former regard. "I shall take no more messages," she said; "I shall neither meddle nor make." "You have never done the queen any service, nor are you capable of doing her any," was one of the insolent replies she returned loudly, and in a storm of passion, to the minister, who still tried to flatter, to cringe, and to soothe. But Oxford's abject humility was, indeed, deserving of scorn. After being treated with the grossest rudeness and insult in the presence of others, he would still go meekly, in the old style, and sup with Bolingbroke and Lady Masham. After railing bitterly at the Secretary of State, as the incarnation of all human perfidy and wickedness, Oxford endeavoured to the last to come to some terms with his rival, and offered, if only they would allow him to keep his place, to serve Bolingbroke and Lady Masham in their own way.*

Still the dragon, as he was called, died hard. He sprung mine after mine under the feet of Bolingbroke, who found himself, until the end of the session, compelled to be always on his guard against Oxford's machinations. The sitting of Parliament was even prolonged until the month of July, entirely, as the Secretary of State supposed, by the artifices of the Prime

* See the Letter of Lewis to Swift, July 17, 1714.

Minister. No art that could damage Bolingbroke in public estimation was omitted. It was remarked, even by Oxford's best friends, that had he exerted but half the diligence, when he had all power in his hands, that he employed vainly to keep it after it had slipped through his fingers, he would never have been forced to succumb to any rival.

The struggle was long and doubtful. At Hanover, to the last, it seemed a question whether Oxford or Bolingbroke would get the better. One day it was reported that the Secretary of State was in all favour, on another that the Lord Treasurer had recovered his lost ground.* Oxford and Oxford's adherents raised against Bolingbroke and his followers the cry of Jacobitism. Bolingbroke, however, boldly met the charge by declaring that he had proofs in his own hands of Oxford's dealings with the Jacobites; and to give a public contradiction to the imputations that had been brought against him, the Secretary of State advised the Queen to issue a proclamation, offering a reward of five thousand pounds for the apprehension of the Pretender. A bill, with his sanction and assistance, was also brought in against those who should enlist troops for the Pretender's service. These measures were, however, not intended to have any effect, and did not at all mean that Bolingbroke had come to any fixed resolution on the question of the succession. "The proclamation will make no difference," he observed, "to the French envoy, Iberville."†

This blow having failed, Oxford tried another. He gave information to the Whigs of the bribe which Arthur Moore had taken from the Spanish ministers during the negotiations about the treaty of commerce,

* See Hanover Papers, Cadogan to Bothmar, May $\frac{7}{18}$, 1714.

† Iberville to Torcy, July, 2, 1714.

in the hope that Bolingbroke would be damaged by the exposure of his creature's disgraceful cupidity. The subject was brought before the House of Lords. Thirty great English merchants petitioned to be heard against the three explanatory articles of this treaty of commerce; Oxford and Bolingbroke openly spoke and voted on different sides; and an address was carried asking her Majesty for all the papers, and the names of those who had advised her to agree to such stipulations. Arthur Moore was called to the bar, and subjected to a severe cross-examination by Lord Cowper. The Secretary to the Commissioners of Trade and Plantations acknowledged having seen a letter from a Spanish minister to Moore declaring that the two thousand louis d'or were only to be paid him on the condition that the three explanatory articles were ratified. The directors of the South Sea scheme solemnly expelled Moore from their body. Still further proceedings were meditated against him by the House of Lords both for his conduct on this business and on that of the Assiento Contract; and the indignation which was everywhere so warmly expressed against Moore was understood to glance upwards very unequivocally at his patron, Lord Bolingbroke. This was not the most pleasant situation for a statesman to find himself in, as he was just on the eve of being made Prime Minister. Bolingbroke put an end to the session while the matter was still under consideration, and wrote to Swift: "If my grooms did not live a happier life than I have done this great while, I am sure they would quit my service."*

Swift had gone into the country to be out of the way of the final struggle between Oxford and Bolingbroke. The Dean boarded and lodged for a guinea a week with

* Letter to Swift, July 13, 1714.

a country clergyman at the small village of Letcombe, in Berkshire. There he wrote his Free Thoughts on the Present State of Affairs, and sent it up to his friend, Charles Ford, the gazetteer, to be printed by Barber. Barber, to make his court, showed the anonymous manuscript to Bolingbroke, who was highly delighted with it, and took it home, without the author's consent, to make some additions and alterations. Weeks passed on, but still the manuscript was not returned, much to the indignation of Swift and his friend Ford. It is evident, however, that Bolingbroke guessed who the author was, and considered himself entitled to take what might otherwise have been regarded as an unwarrantable liberty. He kept the manuscript by him so long that the opportunity for publishing it was lost before the great event occurred which entirely changed the position of affairs. But though Swift has been highly praised by Walter Scott and others for adhering faithfully to Oxford, at this crisis of his fortunes, whoever reads the Free Thoughts with attention, will be inclined to doubt whether the panegyric was deserved. All reconciliation between Oxford and Bolingbroke being hopeless, this was not exactly the time to dwell strongly on Oxford's faults; and yet it is on Oxford's faults that the author lays the principal blame for the dissensions which had arisen in the Court and the Government. Bolingbroke's failings are touched with a very gentle hand. He is ably defended from the accusation of seeking to bring in the Pretender; and, as Ford himself observed to Swift, the manuscript was as much calculated to do Bolingbroke service as though it had been written by his own directions.* It reads very much like, as though the politic author, notwithstanding his professions of

* Charles Ford to Swift, July 17, 1714.

attachment to Oxford, and his offer to accompany him in his retirement, was preparing to worship the rising sun. Bolingbroke had laughed heartily when he heard that the Dean had gone proudly and morosely into the country to ruminate on the quarrels of his friends. The statesman gave orders to his butler, George, to send Swift, into Berkshire, a hamper of good wine to keep up his spirits. But though Swift many years after declared to Bolingbroke himself, that, "You were always my hero," it is worthy of remark, that, just at this brief season of Bolingbroke's greatness, Swift was really dissatisfied with him, and, like the rest of the world, distrusted his professions of friendship. Swift was anxious to be made historiographer, that, as he said, in a memorial to be shown to the Queen, he might have access to all records in order to compose, as a loyal Tory, the true history of the more recent part of her Majesty's reign. It is, however, more than probable that his real object was to conciliate the Queen by the announcement of his intention to write her history, in the hope that Anne's very proper objections to bestow upon him high ecclesiastical preferment might be removed. Her Majesty could scarcely refuse to confer a bishopric on the clever Dean who undertook to deliver down to posterity the glories of herself and Lady Masham.* To his great annoyance, however, the historiographer's place was filled up by an insignificant personage, totally unknown to fame, named Thomas Madox, Esq., while the author of the manuscript History of the Peace of Utrecht was overlooked. Swift attributed his mortifying disappointment to Bolingbroke. "I am not of your opinion about Lord Bolingbroke," wrote the Dean to Miss

* See the Memorial in Swift's Works, Scott's edition, xvi.

Vanhomrigh; "perhaps he may get the staff, but I cannot rely on his love to me; he knew I had a mind to be historiographer, though I valued it not, but for the public service, yet it is gone to a worthless rogue that nobody knows."* But if the public service, which the dean contemplated rendering as historiographer was to have been anything like his utterly unfair History of the Four Last Years of the Queen, the loss was certainly not very great.

Bolingbroke had reason indeed to congratulate both himself and Swift on the close of the session. Oxford's conduct during the last few days had only rendered the Secretary of State more determined to bring matters between them to a crisis. It was impossible, he said, and with justice, that things could go on any longer as they had been. Never again would he meet Parliament in the position he was then placed. In fact he could not do so. It was said that he must during the recess devise some means to bring in the Pretender, because if he again faced the two Houses in the temper they had just displayed about Arthur Moore's alleged corruptions, not only would the tool himself be prosecuted, but also the master who employed him. As it was, the Queen, by her presence alone, put an end to the many discussions in the House of Lords on the subject, when she appeared in person to prorogue the Parliament on the last day of the session. Never did a minister of state, when so directly attacked, get rid of a disagreeable business in a more unsatisfactory manner. The struggle, therefore, between the colonel and the captain, as Oxford and Bolingbroke were respectively called by the supporters of the Government, became fierce and decisive. The event was no longer doubtful. Lady

* Letter of Aug. 1, 1714.

Masham herself felt that her own influence at Court, at length, depended on getting rid of her former friend and patron, who, in assailing Bolingbroke, had not spared the favourite. It was no longer a duel between the Lord Treasurer and the Secretary of State; Lady Masham herself was now violently on Bolingbroke's side. Even the Duchess of Somerset, whose daughter was married to Sir William Windham, came at last to her aid. All the Jacobites having become disgusted at Oxford's manœuvring procrastination, were also at last convinced of his insincerity, and grew eager to precipitate his fall. Oxford's whisperings, his half confidences, his mysterious hints, his elaborate excuses, his delays, his double dealings, his cunning, would serve him no longer. With such influences to assist him, Bolingbroke, though the names that were given him of Mercurialis and the Sharper Secretary were decidedly not complimentary, and the motives attributed to him of no very elevated kind, gained ground every day.*

The manner in which Bolingbroke flattered the two favourites of the Queen, who, hating each other, had at last made up their differences, and agreed to support him, showed him a master of those arts of intrigue and cajolery which at last so effectually served his purpose. Lady Masham and the Duchess of Somerset had persuaded themselves, that, if Oxford were removed, there would be no other first minister, and that their influence would predominate at Court without the check which was imposed upon it by a Lord Treasurer high in the confidence of the sovereign. Bolingbroke eagerly encouraged them in this delusion; for at the

* See Hanover Papers; the Letters of Bothmar to Robethon at the end of July; Macpherson, ii. 635; Mémoires du Maréchal de Berwick, ii. 224; Lewis to Swift, July 17, 1714.

moment it exactly suited the necessities of his own position. He began to find the want of a good character. His vices had been so notorious, his go-between, Arthur Moore's conduct in the business of the Spanish treaty of commerce had made so much noise, and had been so injurious to Bolingbroke himself, that, even with the support of the rival favourites, the Jacobites, and even the Queen, he found he would not at once be permitted to step into Oxford's place. Some of his colleagues, men of high rank and position, were very scrupulous; and though they were willing to act with him, were not disposed to act absolutely under him. He felt compelled to allow the Treasury to be put into commission, and himself retain his post of Secretary of State, from which he hoped to exercise the power of first minister, without provoking the jealousies and animosities which would be sure to display themselves if he were immediately nominated Lord Treasurer.*

The colleague who gave Bolingbroke the most trouble, and clouded the splendour of his triumph over Oxford, was Shrewsbury. The Duke had returned from Ireland in no satisfied mood. In the quarrels between Oxford and Bolingbroke he took little interest; he was, indeed, displeased with the conduct of both the rival statesmen. Notwithstanding the earnest professions of respect and deference made to him in their long correspondence by Bolingbroke, Shrewsbury had remained studiously aloof from the policy of the Secretary of State. He had taken with him a Whig Secretary to Ireland, and had, as Lord Lieutenant, disregarded all Bolingbroke's advice to keep no terms with the Whigs because they kept no terms with the Government. It was

* Lewis to Swift, July 6, 1714.

with great unwillingness that Shrewsbury left Dublin again for London, to be made a party to the dissensions of the Secretary and the Lord Treasurer. As he totally disapproved of Bolingbroke becoming first minister, it was hoped that he might attempt a reconciliation. No sooner was Oxford's dismissal finally determined upon, than Bolingbroke began to entertain of Shrewsbury all the feelings of jealousy and distrust which he habitually experienced against those who stood in his path. The Duke was to him what Oxford had been; but he could not treat Shrewsbury as he had treated Oxford. The grace and gentleness of Shrewsbury's manners disarmed all opposition; his sweet temper conciliated even the fiercest of politicians; his age, his rank, and the great services which he had rendered to the Revolution when William of Orange was seated on the throne, rendered him an object of respectful interest to the generation which had grown up since that great event first startled the world. There were no asperities, no angularities in Shrewsbury's nature; there was nothing to invite opposition, to fix an enmity upon, to produce hatred. By the mere accident of position, Shrewsbury's character exerted at this time a kind of moral influence which almost imperceptibly but most effectually counteracted all Bolingbroke's ambitious schemes. The Secretary of State was greatly irritated even by the mere presence of the courteous and unassuming Shrewsbury; and, as usual, he could not keep his irritation to himself. When Oxford and Shrewsbury were observed talking together, Bolingbroke broke out to Arbuthnot, "I know how I stand with that man," pointing to Oxford; "but as to the other I cannot tell."* In the great changes at Court then daily expected, Shrewsbury's intentions

* Arbuthnot to Swift, July 17, and Ford to Swift, July 20, 1714.

were a mystery, and he made Bolingbroke feel extremely uncomfortable.

The blow, after being for some days strangely delayed, was at last struck. On Tuesday, the 27th of July, after many outbursts of impotent rage, which did not raise his character even in the opinion of his most devoted adherents, Oxford was at last dismissed from office. He retired without a pension or dukedom, as he had been given to expect, and with every mark of disgrace. On the very evening of the Lord Treasurer's fall, Bolingbroke entertained at his house in Golden Square, Stanhope, Craggs, Pulteney, Walpole, and Cadogan, who, all Whigs, and friends of Marlborough as they were, sat down to dine with the Secretary of State and Sir William Windham, then Chancellor of the Exchequer. The greatest reproach that Bolingbroke had really made against Oxford was his baseness in seeking to court the Whigs at the expense of the Tories. Yet Oxford had never had the principal opponents of the ministry openly at his own table, as Bolingbroke then had them at his. Well might the Under Secretary, Lewis, exclaim to Swift on relating this strange circumstance, "What if the dragon had done so!"* The conduct of the Whig leaders in accepting the invitation was easily explained; all they wished to do was to throw as much confusion as possible into the camp of the enemy, and to increase the dissensions which then prevailed in the ministerial ranks. But what could be Bolingbroke's motive in thus surrounding his dining-table at such a moment with his political adversaries? This was not the only extraordinary proceeding on his part during the brief period when he might be considered

* Lewis to Swift, July 29, 1714.

virtual Prime Minister and master both of the Court and Government. On the very next day he requested his confidant, John Drummond, to get ready to set out for Holland, with a commission requesting the Earl of Albemarle to mediate between the English Government and the Elector of Hanover, and to establish a good understanding between Bolingbroke and the legal successor to the crown. From these facts the deduction has been drawn that the Secretary of State was at this brief period of his greatness really in favour of the House of Hanover, but that having no time to carry his intentions into effect, the Elector persisted most erroneously in regarding him as an enemy.*

But as Bolingbroke himself, when it was clearly his interest to do so, never declared that he was at this time on the point of helping to carry out the Act of Settlement, and as the evidence to the contrary is much less equivocal,† all that can be affirmed with certainty is, he was not at the moment of his becoming chief of the ministry desirous of driving the Elector to despair. For a time he wished to continue the old system of trimming between the Hanoverians and Jacobites. He assured Gaultier that his sentiments were still favourable to the Pretender, if the young man would only act in conformity with the wishes of the Tories.‡ The Duke of Marlborough's arrival in England was daily expected. Any public manifestation of the ministry in favour of the Stuarts would immediately have been met by the Whigs by an appeal to arms. It was necessary at the moment to keep matters quiet. Hence the Whigs were to be courted, and an attempt

* See Stuart Papers; Macpherson, ii. 533.

† See Marchmont Papers, ii. 241.

‡ Gaultier to Torcy, $\frac{\text{July } 27}{\text{Aug. } 7}$, 1714.

was to be made to come to a better understanding with the Court of Hanover. But Bolingbroke himself afterwards confessed quite enough to justify the apprehensions which prevailed. When he had every motive to deny that any violent designs were meditated, he admitted that he was preparing to adopt measures which must in themselves have produced a revolution, and probably led to a civil war. These measures, which he does not disclaim, and even defends as of an extremely innocent and justifiable nature, were to tax the fundholders at proportions greater than the rest of the community, because "the lender of money added nothing to the common stock and throve by the public calamity;" to strike at the two great commercial corporations, the Bank and the East India Company, because they were strongholds of the City Whigs, and because "the Bank had been extravagant enough to pull off the mask" by remonstrating against the dismissal of Godolphin's ministry; and to restrain "the influence of the monied interest on the legislature and matters of State," because "the country gentlemen were vexed, put to great expenses, and even baffled by the traders in their elections."* Even when expressed in Bolingbroke's own language, and in his own justification, these designs seem the most extravagant ever entertained by an English statesman. Could they have been carried into effect they must have destroyed the great system of public credit which Montague had founded, and have checked for ever that noble expansion of our commercial prosperity which was to be the wonder and envy of the world. According to these notions which, with his recent conduct in devising the Schism Act against the dissenters, constituted the Toryism of

* See the Letter to Sir W. Windham.

Bolingbroke, the merchants of England, and, indeed, all the trading classes were to be mere hewers of wood and drawers of water to the country gentlemen. They were not to presume to have an opinion on an affair of State; they were to be especially taxed for the crime of lending money to the Government; and to contest a borough against a landed proprietor, and to put him to any expense in his election, was a monstrous abuse which demanded the interference of the legislature. If these were the principles which Bolingbroke avowed and defended in the season of his disgrace, what might not have been expected in the day of his power?

The day of his power was, however, scarcely permitted to dawn. On the night of Oxford's dismissal there had been a stormy altercation in council while the Queen was present. The agitation in which she had been kept by Oxford's struggles to keep his place had been too much for her delicate health; the violence of the last scene was a death-blow; she declared to one of her physicians that she could not survive it. On the two following days, Wednesday and Thursday, she was much indisposed; and on the morning of Friday, the 30th of July, she fell back speechless into the arms of her attendants from a fit of apoplexy. Her life was evidently in the greatest danger. The council assembled with anxiety and alarm. In the midst of their deliberations they were surprised by the entrance of the Dukes of Somerset and Argyle, who, without being summoned, took their places at the board. This step was said to have been taken in concert with Shrewsbury, who thanked the two Whig peers for their seasonable attendance; it certainly disconcerted all the designs of Bolingbroke. With fierce rage at his heart, and a smiling face, he was obliged in this emergency to

acquiesce in Shrewsbury being nominated Lord Treasurer, to proceed himself to Kensington and inform the poor Queen, who had rallied from the first effects of the seizure, of what the council had done; and to see Anne with a trembling hand give the white staff to Shrewsbury, telling him to use it for the good of her people. It was a bitter mortification; but worse remained behind.

Anne soon fell back in a state of stupefaction. It was clear that she could live but for a few hours; all the members of the Privy Council were summoned to attend; and while life remained in the body of the Queen, Bolingbroke, though still holding the seals of Secretary of State, had already on Saturday become a cypher, and the Government was in the hands of his enemies. It was in vain to struggle. The Whigs having the law on their side, and being confident that they would be supported by the Parliament and the people, were bold, energetic, and determined. The crisis they had long foreseen had at last come; and the veteran statesmen of the junto were fully equal to the occasion. Then was seen what an advantage it was for a party to be led by men with decided principles and positive convictions. Nothing was omitted to render the succession of the Elector secure and easy. Troops were at once ordered to London; the regiments at Ostend were sent for; an embargo was laid upon the ports. The fleet was commanded to put to sea; the Hanoverian envoy, with the black box containing the roll of regents, requested to be ready; and the heralds and Life Guards kept mounted to proclaim the new King the moment the breath should be out of the dying Queen. And all this time, Bolingbroke and his friends could do nothing but look irresolute at each other; and, like mere clerks, to

carry out with feigned readiness the orders which they knew to be fatal to themselves and to their party. At last, on Sunday morning, the 1st of August, the day appointed for the shameful Schism Act to come into operation, the Queen expired, and George I. was, without the least difficulty or opposition, proclaimed King of Great Britain and Ireland. Bolingbroke's manservant rode through Wantage with the news; and Swift, at Letcombe, was informed that Anne was no longer sovereign, and his political services no longer required, just as he was sitting down to dinner. Two days afterwards he received a letter from Bolingbroke himself, tersely expressing his feelings at the blow which had been to him so disastrous, and of which he still felt the crushing force. "The Earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday; the Queen died on Sunday. What a world is this! and how does Fortune banter us!"*

It would be vain to attempt fully to depict Bolingbroke's real state of mind as the crown passed so quietly from the head of Anne to that of her lawful successor. The proscription of himself and his friends was not exactly foreseen by him, though there was reason to apprehend it; but it is the greatest condemnation of the course he had pursued during the last four years, to find him at this supreme moment conscious that the event which had long been so imminent, was in effect the death-blow to the party he had striven to establish in power. Whatever occurred, he knew that the Tories were undone. "The grief of my soul," he said to Atterbury, to whom he communicated his secret thoughts, "is this: I see plainly that the Tory party is gone." With this bitter reflection, Bolingbroke had also the galling conviction, that had the Queen's life

* Birch to Swift, Aug. 1, 1714; Bolingbroke to Swift, Aug. 3, 1714.

been spared for a little longer, the ruin of his party might have been prevented. "Lord Bolingbroke has assured me," wrote the French envoy, Iberville, to his Court, "so well prepared were his measures, that in six weeks affairs would have been put into such a condition that there need have been no fear of what has just happened."* This declaration might be seized upon as an open avowal that Bolingbroke, at the time of the Queen's death, did meditate the bringing in of the Pretender. Yet when candidly examined, it also admits of the interpretation, that measures might, in Bolingbroke's opinion, have been taken to secure the Tories from the malice of their enemies, without setting aside the Act of Settlement. Whether such measures ever could have been taken is another question; and it may be unhesitatingly decided in the negative. It was absurd to suppose that the House of Hanover, in succeeding to the crown, was to receive the law from the Tories, and at their bidding deprive themselves of the services of those Whig statesmen whom they regarded as, on principle, their best friends. This would, indeed, have been to make the sovereign much more really a Doge of Venice than the most narrow and oligarchical of Whigs ever sought to accomplish. Whatever Bolingbroke might pretend to others, or seek even to persuade himself, the establishment of the Tories in power, in such a manner as to put them above all the efforts of their enemies to dislodge them, could only have been effected by the restoration of the House of Stuart; and to bring about this result, the very measures which he primarily designed to defeat the plans of the Whigs must inevitably have led. His friend Atterbury, then Bishop of Rochester, whom he had intended to be Privy Seal,

* Iberville, Aug. 2, 1714.

and who was one of the most vain, restless, and aspiring of prelates, saw this consequence very plainly. Just at the death of the Queen, he is said to have offered himself to head a troop of Life Guards in his lawn sleeves, and proclaim James III. Bolingbroke, however, could not bring his mind to concur in such a resolution; and the precious moments slipped rapidly away. The bishop turned on his heels, indignantly declaring that the noblest cause in the world was thrown away for want of spirit.* Bolingbroke attended the proclamation of King George at the Guildhall, and though there was an attempt made to affront him as he passed through the streets in his carriage, the applause drowned the hisses. Oxford was by no means so well received.†

There can be no doubt that Bolingbroke acted wisely in refusing to sanction Atterbury's desperate proposal to proclaim the son of James II. The bishop was one of the most indiscreet of men; and the attempt would have only recoiled on the heads of its authors. When James II. died, a foolish effort was made by some Jacobites to proclaim his son in the streets of London. As soon as their design became known, the mob rose, pelted the procession with stones, pursued the gaudily-dressed heralds with frightful yells, and obliged them to throw away their tabards, and to fly for their lives.‡ A similar result would assuredly have overtaken the enterprise Atterbury advised. The prelate's lawn sleeves would soon have been covered with mud, and torn from his back; and both he and his followers would have thought themselves happily out of the riot they must have occasioned by being lodged in the Round House.

* See Walpole's George II. † Ford to Swift, Aug. 5, 1714.
‡ Lettres Historique, mois de novembre, 1701.

Another restoration of the Stuarts, had the Queen lived ever so long, and Bolingbroke's design been ever so matured, I hold to have been impossible. There was no analogy between the state of the nation in the time of Richard Cromwell, and the state of the nation in the reign of Queen Anne. At one period the people were weary of civil commotions, sick of civil war, and apprehensive of all the horrors of a military anarchy. Charles I. was looked upon by great numbers as a martyr to their church, and his reign remembered with regret. The memory of James II. was regarded with very different feelings. The people were still proud of the Revolution of 1688, and of the great results it had brought about; and there was no sorrow mingled with their joy. Wealth and intelligence had spread far beyond all calculation; commercial prosperity had struck the deepest roots; and the military renown of the country had been carried to the highest point over the head of her ancient rival. A Restoration, in the minds of the great body of the people, meant a complete reversal of this happy state of things. It meant subserviency to France, persecution, disgrace, repudiation, bankruptcy; and these prejudices would on trial have been found too strong to be overcome by any minister. Since the Revolution, a generation had grown up which had been nurtured by it, and educated under it, and which looked on the assertion of a divine right as the folly of maniacs. The stream could never have been turned back. Looking at the question in every light, the conviction is forced upon us, that, though the Jacobites were numerous among certain classes of society, they stood upon very narrow ground; and that a Restoration was hopeless, not so much from the conduct of this or that statesman, as because England had outgrown the Stuarts.

CHAPTER XI.

1714—1716.

A FALL.

As yet, however, Bolingbroke had not abandoned all hope of preserving his place. The new King was known to be a man of moderate opinions, and averse to extreme measures. It seemed to be his interest to conciliate the Tories, or at least not to allow their opponents to tyrannize over them. It might not be impossible to make use of the weapons used by the Whigs themselves, and raise the cry of Jacobitism against them as loudly as they were shouting it against the Tories. "The Whigs are a pack of Jacobites; that shall be the cry in a month, if you please," Bolingbroke wrote to Swift on the 3rd of August. On the same day he addressed a letter in French to King George, who had not yet set out from Hanover. "I take the liberty," Bolingbroke said, "in the midst of the acclamations of your people, to testify to your Majesty the joy that I feel to become the subject of so great a prince. The same spirit prevails everywhere; and the factions which have generally disturbed the Government are no more. May God grant that your Majesty's wisdom and firmness may hinder

them from again coming to life!" The letter concluded by assuring the King that the same principles of honour and conscience which had induced Bolingbroke to serve the late Queen with honour and fidelity to the day of her death, would attach him devotedly to his present Majesty, and that, in whatever station he might be employed, either in the Court, Parliament, or the country, he would endeavour to deserve the title of his Majesty's most humble, most faithful, and most obedient servant.* This was in a different strain from that in which Bolingbroke had ever before spoken or written of Hanover. He had gone so far as to say, not many months before, in a very imprudent moment, when the wine was in his head, "I will never serve the Elector." This declaration was now remembered against him; and the many enemies he had made were firmly resolved that he should be taken at his word.

They were not slow in giving him to understand that all power had passed out of his hands. The black box had been opened, and the five-and-twenty regents, most of whom were Whigs, or those whom Bolingbroke had reason to dislike even still more, the Whimsical Tories, began to exercise their power without the slightest consideration to the ministers who still held office. Bolingbroke had to listen humbly and in silence to their severe rebukes for the manner in which the outposts had been left in so defenceless a condition. It was useless for him to attempt any justification. He was met by lowering looks at the Council Board even from the great officers of state who had been his own colleagues, and the five-and-twenty regents, who appeared to him like five-and-twenty kings, evidently regarded him as a traitor. Addison was appointed

* Bol. Corr., ii. 679.

their secretary. They gave orders that all the correspondence with foreign Courts was to be brought to him; and Bolingbroke, who had been a week ago master of the Court and Government, was kept for hours in the antechamber with his blue bag in his hand, the object of derision to lackeys and grooms, while he was made to wait the good pleasure of the regents. His proud spirit suffered keenly the humiliation to which he was subjected; but his enemies were compelled to acknowledge that he bore all that he was obliged to endure with patience and even dignity. In his pride of place and genius, while heated by party passion and the fierce struggles of power, he had given many cruel provocations; and he was soon made to expect no mercy at the hands of those from whom, as he candidly acknowledged, he had deserved none.*

He was still, however, nominally a minister of the crown. As long as he continued in office, the Tories still hoped that they were to be managed, and spoke of enjoying some share of the king's favour, while the other party were not satisfied that their success was complete. Of all the members of Queen Anne's Government, he was the most obnoxious to the Whigs: to see him still hold the seals a day longer than was necessary became intolerable to the triumphant faction. Neither Bolingbroke nor his enemies were long kept in suspense as to his fate. His dutiful letter to the King remained without an answer: but about the middle of August, an order came from his Majesty summarily dismissing him, and appointing Lord Townshend, the author of the Barrier Treaty,

* "I received no mercy from the Whigs, and I had deserved none."—Letter to Sir W. Windham.

to his office. Other servants of the Queen were permitted to keep their places until the King's arrival: to Bolingbroke no such forbearance was shown. It was impossible, in his case, to forego any longer the luxury of revenge. Prior's letters from France were received with great distrust: it was said that he wrote in cypher what he might well have communicated in plain language; and some of the regents suspected Bolingbroke of keeping back his despatches.* His dismissal from the office he had held for four years was to them a cause of joy only second to the death of the Queen. "The removal of Lord Bolingbroke," wrote the gentle and moderate Addison, "has put a seasonable check to an interest that was making in many places for members in the next Parliament, and was very much relished by the people, who ascribed to him in a great measure the decay of trade and public credit." †

But it was not thought enough to dismiss Bolingbroke from office. His papers were sealed up; though Hare, his under-secretary, managed to conceal the most valuable and important.‡ Bolingbroke, however, received from this proceeding of his enemies, a sufficient warning that more was meditated against himself than mere exclusion from power.

After attending the deliberations of the old Parliament, which met, according to the Act of Settlement, on the death of the Queen, and witnessing in every discussion the mortification of his friends, he went into the country at the beginning of September. As he took up his residence at Bucklersbury rather than at Ashdown Park, his wife probably shared his retire-

* Bothmar to Robethon, Aug. 10, 1714; Macpherson, ii. 641.

† Hanover Papers; Addison to Robethon, Sept. 4, 1714.

‡ See the Preface to the Bol. Corr.

ment. Some kind of reconciliation was certainly come to between them in the season of his disgrace; for afterwards, when the whole world seemed against him, she considered it her duty and her honour to defend her husband. Whatever may have been her feelings towards him in the hour of his prosperity, when his political fortunes were at the blackest, she no longer spoke of herself as the discarded mistress.* But though Swift was one of her admirers, Bolingbroke never seems to have regarded her with much love or esteem. In the country, however, there were still his dogs and horses, his neighbours to smoke with, and his wheat and barley to get in; and these occupations still afforded him real pleasure.† What a change had occurred in his prospects since he hunted the last autumn at Ashdown Park! Then the world smiled upon him; he was full of business; all the foreign correspondence of the kingdom was directed by him; princes and kings contended for his favour; the settlement of Europe was made by him; the succession to the crown seemed to depend upon his mere will and pleasure. And now all was changed. He was in disgrace; he had been driven from the Court and the Government; his enemies were all-powerful; his papers were sealed up; he was shunned by everybody who hoped to profit in the new order of things; his name was scarcely ever mentioned without obloquy; threats of banishment, of confiscation, of the scaffold, were uttered against him: he had reason to dread the worst vengeance of his foes. Bitter thoughts of how all this might have been prevented, had the Queen lived but a little while longer, or Oxford been a little

* See her Letters to Swift, of May 5 and Aug. 4, 1716.

† Swift to Bolingbroke, Sept. 14, 1714.

more resolute, attended him through the pleasant corn fields, as he smoked tobacco, and even while the deep-mouthed baying of his hounds came down the wind like rich music to his ears.

Then many of the country squires about him were Jacobites, and loudly lamented their lost opportunity. They told him plainly what they thought. Could nothing be done? Were they to lie down quietly and allow their enemies to ride roughshod over them? Or might they not retrieve the game by setting up a Tory king?

Just at this time a pamphlet appeared, entitled the Secret History of the White Staff. The author was Defoe; but it was generally supposed to be written under Oxford's instigation; and professed to relate how he had during his administration counteracted the Jacobite designs of Bolingbroke and his supporters, and how they had, in order to bring in James III., made him at last a martyr to the Protestant succession. The work produced what has been called a sensation; and seemed to confirm all the worst suspicions against Bolingbroke which the Whigs had so long avowed. Appearing at such a moment, it was calculated to do him a serious injury by adding fuel to the animosity which was supposed to prevail against him in the highest places. An answer to this pamphlet was immediately afterwards published, retorting on Oxford the very charges which his panegyrist made against Bolingbroke and Atterbury; it is doubtful, however, whether the reply, which was not remarkable either for power or spirit, was produced with Bolingbroke's sanction or knowledge; and the only result of the two publications was to convince the majority of the reading public of the truth of the accusations respectively

made by the assailants of both the late Lord Treasurer and the late Secretary of State.*

The noise of the controversy had scarcely died away, when another circumstance occurred which strengthened these allegations. A proclamation from the Pretender, signed James R., was published, in which he explained his position, asserted his hereditary right to the crown, and gave his reasons for remaining quiet during his sister's reign, "whose good intentions towards us," he said, "we could not, for some time past, well doubt." This proclamation was greedily seized upon by the Whigs, and was at first declared by the Tories to be a forgery. All doubts of its authenticity being soon set aside, Bolingbroke's enemies asked, what further proof could be required? Here was the Pretender himself, admitting, under his own hand, that Queen Anne's ministers had been acting in concert with him to put him on the throne. Bolingbroke himself professed as much indignation at the Pretender's letter as the Whigs.

His friend, Lord Strafford, was recalled from the Hague. On landing in England he was requested to give up all his instructions and papers. Prior was ordered to return from France, and his correspondence was also seized. A severe inquisition was evidently meditated into the conduct of all who had anything to do with the late negotiations for peace; and of these Bolingbroke was the chief. All the agents of the last Government were in the greatest alarm. In the midst of these apprehensions the Duke of Ormond, who had been succeeded by Marlborough as captain-general of the forces, but who, in other respects, had

* See Secret History of the White Staff; the Detection of the Sophistries of that pamphlet. There was also another answer, entitled the History of the Mitre and Purse.

been treated with courtesy and consideration by the new King, suddenly disappeared; and it was prematurely alleged that he had sought shelter from the storm which was evidently impending by taking refuge in France. Here, again, it was said, was another striking confirmation of all the worst suspicions of Bolingbroke's enemies: the nobleman who had superseded Marlborough in the command of the English troops, and who, by his refusal to fight, and his desertion of the allies produced the disaster of Denain, had not dared even to wait until his conduct was inquired into, but had at once fled from the anticipated investigation. It was evident that Bolingbroke would not long be allowed to remain in quiet. As he hunted and smoked with his neighbours, and chatted about the crops that were at last safely stacked in his barn-yards, he had reason to expect a visit from his old acquaintances, the messengers of the Secretary of State's office, with a warrant for his apprehension, signed by his successor, Lord Townshend.

The winter passed on, however, and Bolingbroke was still allowed to live unmolested at his country seat.

The Whigs were busily engaged in securing their power. All idea of managing the Tories was given up; and it was clear that their opponents were to have exclusive possession of office. Nor can the King or his advisers be justly blamed for following this course. It was necessary that there should be a ministry united in their councils, and acting confidently together; and this result could only be attained by putting the Government entirely into the hands of the Whigs. George I. naturally preferred men whom he could trust, because he knew them to be his friends, than men whom there was only too much reason to believe to be his enemies, and who certainly,

while they had power, during the late reign, had treated both his mother and himself with very little deference. During the four years Bolingbroke had been Secretary of State he had been constantly bickering with the residents from Hanover at the English Court; nor can it be shown that throughout that period he ever seemed to care how his conduct was represented to the Elector. He had demanded the recall of one Hanoverian envoy; he had forbidden another to appear at Court; the last letter Anne wrote to the Princess Sophia, just before the aged Electress died, contained a strong rebuke for the publication of the correspondence about the Duke of Cambridge coming over. Nor can it be said that the acts of the Elector, or his late mother, had been at all unreasonable. They were suspected of being indifferent to the succession at all; and so moderate, indeed, were their proceedings, that even an authoress in our day, strongly devoted to the cause of the Stuarts, has deduced from their temperate conduct the conclusion that the Electress Sophia was really indifferent to the succession, and actually preferred that the heir of James II. should have the crown rather than her own son.* It is impossible to avoid seeing that, had Bolingbroke, when minister, really shown a sincere disposition to conciliate the Elector, he might have succeeded. But every line of his correspondence, and every act which he performed, proved that he had no such disposition. He could not, therefore, justly complain at this time that he and his friends were neglected and distrusted. He only reaped what he had himself sown. Nor could

* Miss Strickland in her Life of the Princess Sophia.

THE PEOPLE'S P

he, who avowed that his great object as a minister was "to fill all employments in the kingdom, down to the meanest of them, with Tories,"* justly turn round upon his opponents and cry out against their injustice for filling all the offices at their disposal with Whigs. It was because the spring had been so violently pressed down that there was such a violent recoil. Men who expect moderation from their opponents should themselves act with moderation. The manner in which Bolingbroke had, during the reign of Anne, pursued the system of governing solely by the Tories, had rendered it almost inevitable that George I. should govern almost solely by the Whigs.

The Parliament was dissolved at the beginning of the year 1715. Every party engine and all the influence of the Court, were used to secure a majority for the Whigs at the new elections. The Bank, the East India Company, the South Sea Company, all the monied interest, put forth their strength. The Tory majority, which, ever since the dissolution after the trial of Sacheverell, had dominated in the House of Commons, disappeared, never again to be revived during the life of Bolingbroke, or, indeed, until some years after the breaking out of the American war during the administration of Lord North. All restraint was now taken from the Whigs: they had the power; and it was soon seen how they would use it.

A proscription began, of which Bolingbroke learnt, on coming to town early in March to attend his duties in the new Parliament, that he was to be one of the first victims. The advice of the mild

* Letter to Sir W. Windham.

and venerable Somers was once more disregarded, and the Whigs were eager for revenge. A letter of Bolingbroke on this subject has been preserved, delineating, with apparent truth, the position of affairs. "George the First," Bolingbroke wrote, "set out from Hanover with a resolution of oppressing no set of men that would be quiet subjects. But as soon as he came into Holland a contrary resolution was taken, at the earnest importunity of the allies, and particularly of Heinsius and some of the Whigs. Lord Townshend came triumphing to acquaint Lord Somers with all the measures of proscription and persecution which they intended, and to which the King had at last consented. The old peer asked what he meant, and shed tears on the foresight of measures like those of the Roman Triumvirate."

In the royal speech which was given to be read by the Lord Chancellor Cowper, at the meeting of the new Parliament, on the 21st of March, his Majesty's dissatisfaction with the treaty of peace, and the conduct of the late Queen's advisers was plainly declared. That dissatisfaction was expressed still more strongly in the two addresses of the Lords and Commons in reply; and Oxford and Bolingbroke were given very unequivocally to understand that they had to expect little mercy. The Lords uttered a hope, in one portion of their address, that his Majesty would recover the reputation of the kingdom in foreign parts, and declared that they would convince the world by their actions that the loss was not to be imputed to the nation in general. This was condemning by implication the Tory statesmen much in the same style as in their recent royal speeches and addresses Bolingbroke and his friends used to condemn the Whigs. Such a method of party warfare on both sides

was greatly to be deplored. The late ministers strongly objected to these expressions; and Bolingbroke appeared at the head of the Opposition. He spoke manfully, ably, and eloquently. He would do all, he said, to vindicate the conduct of the last Government. If he had done wrong he was willing to be punished; but it was hard to be censured without being heard in his defence. He eulogized both the late Queen and the present King, declaring that his Majesty was a prince of great wisdom, equity, and justice, and that their lordships would do well to imitate his example. He concluded by moving that the words "recover the reputation of the kingdom," and the rest of the paragraph might be omitted. He was followed by Strafford and Shrewsbury on the same side; and opposed by Wharton, Cowper, Nottingham, Aylesford, and Devonshire. It was not creditable to the House of Lords, in which Bolingbroke and his friends had recently been so powerful, that this condemnatory address was, however, carried against him by sixty-six votes to thirty-three, exactly two to one.*

In the House of Commons the late ministers even fared still worse. There, though General Stanhope had been made the other Secretary of State in the place of Squire Bromley, Walpole, the Paymaster of the Forces, was, in fact, the leader of the Government. His ascendancy was almost as great over the Whigs as Mr. Secretary St. John's had ever been over the Tories, and he was quite as much resolved to gratify their vengeance and his own. It is true that Bolingbroke, forgetting how long he had, at the head of his party, called out for measures of proscription against his political opponents, now felt that it was extremely wrong in

* Parl. Hist., vi. 46.

ministers whose business it was to restrain the violence of their followers "to act as tribunes of the people."* Walpole, though not at all either a merciless man or fond of extreme measures, followed the very bad example his rival had set. He fully believed that Bolingbroke and his friends had been concerting measures to put the Pretender on the throne; and that they had shamefully given up to France all the successes of the war. Into all their conduct he was determined to exercise the most vigorous scrutiny. On the first day of the session he gave Bolingbroke fully to understand that he was to expect the worst. Walpole was made chairman of the committee to prepare the address of the Commons in answer to the royal speech. This address was even stronger against the late Government than that which was carried by the Lords; and the positive assurance was given to the King that the representatives of the people would spare no efforts to inquire into past mismanagements, and to bring the authors of them to condign punishment. Walpole's own speech even breathed a still more acrimonious spirit. Some of the Tories, particularly Bolingbroke's friends, General Ross and Sir William Windham, objected to the language of the address, and declared that certain passages which censured the late ministry could only be construed into a reflection upon the memory of the late Queen. "Nothing," said Walpole, "is further from my intention than to brand the memory of the Queen. All I intend is to expose and punish the evil counsellors who deluded her into pernicious measures. No person, indeed, should be condemned unheard; but those who made and advised the peace, by which, as the whole nation is sensible, the honour and in-

* The Letter to Sir W. Windham.

terest of the country were given up, must, in due time, be called to account." General Stanhope followed in a similar style. In taking notice of a report that Queen Anne's advisers were only censured in general terms, he declared, that though many papers had been removed from the public offices, there was sufficient evidence to show that the late ministers were the most corrupt that ever sat at the helm, and he pledged himself that the whole business should soon be brought before the House. The Tories were now exactly in the position of their opponents in recent sessions; the address was carried by two hundred and forty-four against one hundred and thirty-eight.*

It was clear, then, that a prosecution was impending over both Oxford and Bolingbroke. Oxford conducted himself with his characteristic caution. He came from the country to town and went back from town to the country several times in a mysterious, uncertain way, speaking little, and that little quite unintelligible, seldom appearing in public, and never putting himself prominently forward in opposition. Bolingbroke assumed quite a bold and defiant air. His speech on the first day of the session was almost a challenge to his opponents; he showed himself everywhere; spoke confidently of his innocence; and seemed as though he cared nothing for what his enemies might do. This was, however, all acting. He was at heart much more alarmed than Oxford. After showing himself at the theatre, on the evening of the 25th of March, complimenting the actors, and bespeaking a play for the next night, he suddenly, with all the ready money he could raise on his property, left town in the disguise of a valet to the French messenger, La Vigne, who was just

* Parl. Hist., vii. 50.

going over to Paris. He wrote from Dover a letter to his friend, George Granville, then Lord Lansdowne, and was then conveyed quietly over to Calais.

The next day Bolingbroke's letter was shown about in manuscript, and gave rise to some curious speculations. Even those who were most in his confidence, could not understand some of the allusions; nor has, indeed, any satisfactory explanation of them been given up to this hour. They showed, however, plainly enough, that the statesman who, up to the time of his flight, had put on so brave an appearance, was really in a positive fright. "I left town so abruptly," he wrote, "that I had not time to take leave of you or any of my friends. You will excuse me when you know, that I had certain and repeated information, from some who are in the secret of affairs, that a resolution was taken by those who have power to execute it, to pursue me to the scaffold. My blood was to have been the cement of a new alliance; nor could my innocence be any security after it had been once demanded from abroad, and resolved on at home, that it was necessary to cut me off."

All this seemed strange, mysterious, perplexing. People asked each other what it did actually mean? Prior, indeed, was just coming over from Paris, and it was reported that he was about to tell all he knew. Yet this could scarcely be the reason of Bolingbroke's alarm. The private and confidential correspondence of Matt and Henry has been published, and it appears, on the whole, of a very innocent nature; there is certainly nothing like treason in it; still less in the official correspondence between the two friends, which, from the precautions of Bolingbroke's Under Secretary, their enemies had it alone in their power to

examine. Bolingbroke's language indicates other apprehensions: "I had certain and repeated information, from some who are in the secret of affairs, that a resolution was taken by those who have power to execute it, to pursue me to the scaffold. My blood was to be the cement of a new alliance." These words, when taken with the letter already quoted infer that the Pensionary Heinsius, resented Bolingbroke's conduct in the negotiations about the peace so highly that he demanded his head as the price of the renewal of the alliance with England. Elsewhere, Bolingbroke declares that he was to have been accused of high treason; and that from the method of prosecution, his innocence would have availed him nothing. But, surely, even though Heinsius had been ever so thirsty for Bolingbroke's blood, his experience might have told him that in England, even during the worst of times, it was not easy to bring in any man guilty of high treason, unless the crime had actually been committed, and there was sufficient evidence to justify a conviction. Notwithstanding all the means at the command of his enemies, it was found afterwards very difficult to frame two articles of impeachment against either Oxford or Bolingbroke even in appearance looking something like high treason. That on such charges, whatever might have been the determination of his accusers, their blood could ever have been shed, is the wildest improbability.

Who, then, was the influential person that supplied Bolingbroke with the certain and repeated information which induced him to fly from the accusations, and by taking such a step by his own conduct alone give an apparent admission of guilt? It was the work of a master hand; it was the work of Marlborough. Boling-

broke in his extremity thought of his old friendship. He went to the duke, expressed himself anxious to make matters up between them, and earnestly besought his Grace's advice. Marlborough was placable by nature, seldom inclined to act upon his resentments, or ready to refuse the proffered hand. But after all that had passed, he would have been either much more or much less than human—he would perhaps have acted with ridiculous weakness—could he in his heart have forgiven Bolingbroke, or have performed towards him a friendly part. Crueller wrongs no person had ever received from the hands of another than the duke had sustained from the young statesman, whom he had made Secretary-at-War, for whose fidelity he had answered, and whom he had called his son.* Bolingbroke had libelled his wife, encouraged Swift to assail him with merciless satire and vituperation, brought forward accusations of peculation and extortion against him in the House of Commons, taken him from the head of his victorious army, given his command to an enemy, surrendered his glorious conquests, driven him from England, and threatened on his return, almost at the moment of the Queen's death, to commit him to the Tower. And were these things at once to be forgotten or forgiven? The duke acted like himself. He received Bolingbroke with courtesy, professed himself ready to serve him, privately communicated, as one deep in the secrets of Heinsius and the ministers, that his life was to be struck at; that Oxford and the Whigs had come to an understanding of which the price was his blood; and that his only resource was flight. Bolingbroke, being greatly alarmed before, was absolutely appalled at the duke's manner and the duke's words,

* See Marchmont Papers (note), ii. 214.

intimating, as they did, more even than expressed. The consequence was, that in the fears which Marlborough had so artfully practised upon, Bolingbroke did the very last thing which, on the presumption of his innocence, he ought to have done. By flying from his accusers, and seeking refuge in France, he appeared to justify all the allegations of those who charged him with having given up the interests of England by the peace to the French king, and of having been in a deep conspiracy to bring in the Pretender.*

His flight was felt to be so injurious to himself, that some of his friends for some days professed to consider the letter from Dover a forgery. Lord Trevor had most earnestly advised him not to think of leaving England; and to the last moment Bolingbroke had declared that he would follow his friend's counsel. His enemies were now determined to hasten the proceedings against the late ministers. On the 31st of March an address was moved and carried in the House of Commons requesting his Majesty to order all the papers relating to the negotiations about the peace to be laid upon the table. Copies of these documents were soon afterwards brought down to the House by Mr. Secretary Stanhope; but they were found to be so volumi-

* Bolingbroke, in the Letter to Sir W. Windham, denies that he was frightened by Marlborough into leaving England; but even his own language somehow strengthens the belief that this impression, was really correct. "I took the resolution of leaving England, not in a panic terror, or moved by the artifices of the Duke of Marlborough, whom I knew too well, even at that time, to act by his advice or information in any case, but on such grounds as the proceedings which soon followed justified, and as I have never repented building upon." His principal motive for going, he afterwards declared, was his intense personal abhorrence of Oxford, and that he rather preferred banishment to consulting with him about their common defence. But how does this assertion correspond with the letter from Dover? It was certainly written in terror, and even in "panic terror." See also Marchmont Papers, note, ii. 192.

nous that a Select Committee was thought necessary to examine and digest them under proper heads. It was afterwards determined that this should be a Secret Committee, and that it should consist of one-and-twenty members. These members were chosen by ballot; and were all stanch Whigs or Whimsical Tories; not one of them could be said to have any political attachment to Bolingbroke, and some of them were unquestionably his personal enemies. The names of most of them, even to our day, are suggestive of memorable Whig reminiscences, embracing more than half a century of political history. Among them were the respectable Sir Richard Onslow, afterwards a Speaker, and the father of Speakers; Robert Walpole, who could now pay the debt of vengeance contracted in years of rivalry; James Stanhope, full of earnest and conscientious party zeal; Spencer Cowper, a Whig of the Whigs, and who had himself been obnoxious to the Tories; William Pulteney, with whom many years afterwards Bolingbroke was to be closely allied in the struggle against the ascendancy of his old rival; the rough and resolute Hugh Boscawen, the Comptroller of the Household; the time-serving and self-seeking Aislaby, who, on the bursting of the South Sea bubble, was himself to feel the vengeance of the Commons, and be covered with obloquy; the two eminent Whig lawyers, Nicholas Lechmere and Sir Joseph Jekyll; Daniel Lord Finch, who was one day to be as eager for Bolingbroke's pardon as he now was for his punishment; Richard Hampden, whom Bolingbroke had once threatened to commit to the Tower; the fiery and intemperate Thomas, Lord Coningsby, determined to spare no efforts to bring Queen Anne's advisers to justice; the stolid and wealthy Edward Wortley Montagu, blessed in marriage with the

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most brilliant woman of the age, a blessing which he does not appear always to have appreciated; and the respectable Mr. Thomas Pitt, senior, Diamond Pitt as he was called, being the possessor of the great diamond, late Governor of Madras, the grandfather of the William Pitt who became the great Earl of Chatham, and the great-grandfather of the William Pitt who was to become the canonized Tory statesman.

The Committee of Secrecy having been chosen, it was determined to lose no time before proceeding to business. The members of the Committee assembled on the same evening and chose Walpole their chairman; he was, however, taken ill on the following day, and Stanhope was appointed to act in his stead. All books and papers were ordered to be given up to the Committee; it was agreed that five members should constitute a quorum; that they should meet from day to day; and that for greater despatch they should divide themselves into three sub-committees, each to examine a portion of the voluminous papers submitted to their scrutiny. This investigation occupied about six weeks. Bolingbroke's friends affected great confidence, and professed much impatience for the Report of the Committees. The Whigs were equally confident on the other side, declaring that when the Report should appear it would contain most extraordinary revelations. At length, on the 2nd of June, Walpole informed the Commons that the Committee had examined all the books and papers which had been laid before them; that they had matters of the highest importance to communicate; and requested the House to appoint a day to receive the Report. That day week was fixed upon, and all members were ordered to be then in their places.

On the appointed day Walpole rose in a crowded

House. Before producing the Report he moved that the Speaker might issue his warrant to apprehend certain persons who should be named by the Chairman of the Committee; and that no member should be permitted to leave the house. The motion was carried. The lobby was cleared of strangers; the doors were locked; the keys laid upon the table, and the Sergeant-at-Arms commanded to keep guard at the entrance. Walpole named several persons who were to be taken into custody, in order that they might be examined; the two principal being Oxford's cousin, Thomas Harley, and Bolingbroke's friend, Matthew Prior, who, though the debts he had contracted in Paris were unpaid, had just arrived from France. These preliminaries were sufficiently alarming. Walpole informed the House that the Committee had agreed upon their Report; and that it was contained in one large volume with a separate appendix of important papers. He then began to read the Report: with the aid of the clerk the perusal was continued until eight in the evening; it was resumed on the following day, and concluded at about four in the afternoon.

This Report was a most elaborate and able commentary on the whole series of negotiations relating to the peace of Utrecht. It was the composition of Walpole himself, and shows how much energy and hatred he had brought to the task of prosecuting his former rival; for though the conduct of Strafford, Ormond, and Oxford is sternly commented upon, it is on Bolingbroke that the principal weight of condemnation is made to fall. Most of the conclusions are severely drawn; but many of them were unhappily too well justified. No Englishman can at this day undertake to defend the manner in which the

negotiations were conducted. I have already pointed out where they must be considered the most faulty; it is not necessary to repeat those observations by entering into any detailed examination of the allegations of the Committee. But even the remarkable analytical skill with which the Report was drawn up, could not hide from Bolingbroke's enemies the fact that the crimes of which they accused him did not actually amount to high treason. Something more than errors in negotiation, or even wanton misconduct in negotiation, was necessary to bring an English statesman to the block. Throughout the Report there is a painful consciousness that though many of the transactions on which the Committee commented were highly blameable, yet this was not all that was expected or required. They pressed into the service the rigorous statute of Edward III.'s reign; and on the imputed willingness of Bolingbroke and Oxford to surrender Tournay to the French, notwithstanding the Queen's promise to the contrary, attempted to establish a charge of constructive treason by an alleged adhering to her Majesty's enemies. But Tournay had not been given up. Why that town should have been fixed upon on which to build a charge, while Lisle and other places which had actually been taken from the Dutch barrier were allowed to pass without comment, is one of those strange proceedings which become more extraordinary the more they are considered. It is not difficult to see what a reception such charges would have met with had they ever come before the judges. On perusing them, no impartial person can avoid asking, Was it for fear of being tried for his life on these grounds that Bolingbroke fled from his country? The Report was deeply injurious to his reputation as a statesman;

but not from the proofs it contained of any high treason he had committed. As he himself wrote about this production of the Secret Committee: "That step of the Whigs was more cruel than all the others: by a partial representation of facts, and pieces of facts, put together as best suited their purpose, and published to the whole world, they did all that in them lay to expose me for a fool, and to brand me for a knave. But then I had deserved this abundantly at their hands, according to the notion of party justice."*

After the Report had been read, and laid on the table, Sir Thomas Hanmer, and the more moderate section of the House, recommended that further proceedings upon it might be adjourned until after it had been printed and put into the hands of all the members. But Walpole and Stanhope would hear of no delay. Here, they said, was a pretty thing. They had been blamed for not getting the Report ready earlier; and now, when they had produced it, the very persons who blamed them wished the business to be postponed. The motion for the adjournment of the debate was defeated by a large majority. Walpole then rose and said: "After having heard the Report read, I have no doubt that the House is fully convinced that Henry Lord Viscount Bolingbroke is guilty of high treason, and other high crimes and misdemeanors. I therefore impeach him of those crimes. But if any member has anything to say in his behalf, I have no doubt the House will be willing to listen." There was a long pause and a deep silence. None of the time-serving

* The Letter to Sir W. Windham. The Report of the Committee of Secrecy, which ought to be carefully read by every one who undertakes to give an opinion on this portion of Bolingbroke's life, will be found in the Appendix to the seventh volume of the Parliamentary History.

sycophants who had cheered and courted the brilliant Mr. Secretary St. John now stood up to defend the impeached viscount. After a silence of some minutes, a silence that was painfully expressive, one member, a Mr. Hungerford, did indeed express a doubt whether there was anything they had heard in the Report amounting to high treason; another, stout General Ross, rose, saying that he would reserve what he had to say to another occasion, declared his surprise that not a single member had anything to say in Lord Bolingbroke's favour. The motion for the impeachment was carried without a dissentient voice.*

Immediately afterwards Coningsby impeached Oxford. Prior was subjected to a severe examination by the Committee of Secrecy. A few days afterwards came the turns of Strafford and Ormond. Of all the leading members of Queen Anne's Government, Ormond is the only one of whom we know with absolute certainty, that during the last year of her reign, he was heartily engaged in the Jacobite plots, and when Commander-in-chief, was in secret correspondence with the Duke of Berwick.† Yet the motion for his impeachment was only carried by a small majority, and after many expressions of respect and regret. He was looked upon as a nobleman of good intentions and most excellent character, who had been deceived by his more artful colleagues. But his sudden flight to France at leugth silenced his friends, and encouraged his enemies; and he was placed in the same category as Bolingbroke.

The articles of impeachment were first exhibited against Oxford. The opposition made to the eleventh article, charging him with high treason on the business

* Parl. Hist., vii. 66.

† See the Mémoires du Maréchal de Berwick.

of Tournay, and the confession of Sir Joseph Jekyll, that on this question he differed from his associates in the Committee of Secrecy, showed clearly that had Bolingbroke really met his accusers face to face, and stood upon the merits of his case, he would certainly have had very little to fear. He had, however, fairly placed himself in the power of his enemies, and could expect no forbearance. It was not until the 4th of August, after Oxford had been heard in his defence, committed to the Tower, and additional charges exhibited against him, that six articles of impeachment were reported against Bolingbroke. On the 6th, attended by a crowd of Whig members, Walpole went up to the bar of the House of Lords, and in the name of the Commons, solemnly impeached Henry Viscount Bolingbroke of high treason, and other high crimes and misdemeanors; and at the same time he asked the Lords to sequester the accused nobleman from Parliament, and commit him to safe custody. The Lords sent a message to the Commons informing them that in obedience to the request they had ordered the Usher of the Black Rod to attach Lord Bolingbroke and bring him to the bar; that he was not, however, to be found, and had, indeed, long before retired to France. A bill attainting Bolingbroke of high treason was immediately directed to be introduced in default of his surrendering himself to justice by the 10th of September. The bill was not carried without some opposition. On the third reading in the House of Lords, a strong protest was signed by all the noblemen who were still not ashamed to profess some friendship and consideration to the statesman who had lately been so powerful and prosperous; Atterbury, Masham, Bishop Compton, the Marquis of Lansdowne, the young Earl of Jersey,

and two or three other peers, put their names to the protest, against attainting the accused, as they declared, on mere rumour, producing no proof of the charges, and assigning him so short a period to return to the kingdom before the law had to take effect.* All this was, however, futile. The 10th of September arrived, and Bolingbroke did not make his appearance. On the 14th his name was ordered to be erased from the roll of peers.

Bolingbroke had, however, already confirmed the worst imputations of his foes, and apparently justified all their harsh proceedings, by becoming Secretary of State to the Pretender. How he fared in this new undertaking we shall now see.

* Parl. Hist., vii. 143.

CHAPTER XII.

1715—1716.

SECRETARY OF STATE TO THE PRETENDER.

On arriving at Calais, Bolingbroke found a carriage waiting at the landing to convey him to the Governor's house. He was received with unbounded hospitality, and treated with almost as much respect as when he was looked upon in the old town as the harbinger of peace. The next day he went on to Paris. On the road he is said to have met the Earl of Peterborough, who was proceeding in post haste from Turin to London, somewhat anxious about the reception he might meet with from the new sovereign; for, though thoroughly a Whig, his hatred and jealousy of Marlborough had kept him during the last four years allied with the Tories. Bolingbroke and Peterborough passed each other without speaking. The world was changed since, but a few short months ago, the statesman was, in a long correspondence, flattering the eccentric soldier, whose movements were so sudden and rapid that Bolingbroke was obliged to send letters to him at a guess, scarcely knowing in what part of Europe he might at any moment turn up.

At Paris, Bolingbroke was politely welcomed by

the Torcys and all who had a little while ago received him with rapture. But he was no longer the powerful Secretary of State, on whose will depended so many great interests. He had been then all but universally regarded as the finest Englishman of his time, and as one of the finest heads of Europe. He was, to all outward appearances, the same man: his presence as noble, his manners as pleasing, the glance of his eye as brilliant, his intellectual qualities still further ripened by experience. But his power had departed, and he was like a monarch discrowned, or Jove without his thunderbolts. Had Torcy been ever so friendly disposed to Bolingbroke, under the watchful eyes of the British ambassador, Lord Stair, a Scotch nobleman of real courage, ability, warmth, insight, and decision, the friend and pupil of Marlborough, and who had, with some apparent reluctance, been deprived of his regiment by Bolingbroke, on account of his attachment to the Whigs and the Hanoverian succession, the Minister of the aged Louis would have been obliged to act with caution, in order that the country might not again be involved in war. There was then no longer the same unrestrained and cordial intercourse between Bolingbroke and Torcy; and Bolingbroke could not but feel humbled by the change. And the charming Madame de Tencin, the unfrocked nun, the gay devotee at once of religion and pleasure? Madame was all enthusiasm for the Bull of Unigenitus: she had, like a true French woman, with all her gallantry, violently espoused the orthodox side in this great religious controversy. Bolingbroke soon renewed his intimacy with both Madame de Tencin and her sister, Madame de Ferriole. The fallen statesman could, however, no longer assist their exemplary brother, the Abbé de Tencin, secretary to the

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Duke of Orleans, and Madame de Tencin had herself found a field for the display of her talents for intrigue as the zealous assistant of this worthy Abbé. Madame was perfectly conscious, however, of the influence she had established over Bolingbroke, and was prepared to make use of it on occasions. As soon as Bolingbroke was thought to be again the depositary of important state secrets, Madame de Tencin, or the Queen, as he called her, again put forth all her fascinations to extract them from him; but, the amorous statesman was not so easily duped a second time.*

One of Bolingbroke's first proceedings on the very night he arrived in Paris, was to send to the English ambassador's hotel, inform him of the circumstance, and request an interview. Not receiving an immediate reply, the next day he addressed to Lord Stair a letter, which I publish from the copy forwarded by Lord Stair to the government at home.

"Saturday Morning.

"My Lord—I arrived at Paris last night, and immediately sent to acquaint your Lordship with it, and to desire the favour of waiting on you, whenever your conveniency would allow of it.

"I am to repeat the same request, to assure your Lordship that I shall endeavour, in the midst of my own misfortunes, to hold an irreproachable conduct, and to beg your Lordship to be persuaded that I am,

"Your most faithful and obedient servant,

"Bolingbroke."†

The interview was granted. Lord Stair received him with great kindness, and indeed, as Bolingbroke acknowledged, always acted towards him in his misfor-

* See Bolingbroke à Mme. de Ferriole, Juin 3, 1715.

† State Paper Office, Foreign Correspondence.

tunes a very friendly part. Bolingbroke promised the ambassador that he would enter into no engagements with the Jacobites, and studiously avoid, by his own conduct, affording his enemies in England any excuse for treating him with harshness. He repeated the same assurance shortly afterwards to Lord Stair in another letter, inclosing one to Lord Stanhope, so submissive that some of his friends accused him of meanness of spirit. The letter to Stanhope has been long published; this second letter to Lord Stair I have found in the State Paper Office, and here insert from the original manuscript.

"MY LORD—I enclose a letter which I have writ to Mr. Secretary Stanhope, and which I beg of your Lordship to convey in your pacquet to him. The favour I ask of him I must ask of your Lordship too; and I will conduct myself so as to give you no reason to repent your granting of it.

"On account of my own satisfaction, as well as for other reasons, which I need not repeat, I am anxious [not?] to be any longer at this place. I expect a few necessaries, which I cannot much longer want, and I remove; but whither I vow I can hardly determine. The more obscure my retreat is, the better it will suit my circumstances and my temper of mind. Wherever I am, I shall ever be,

"Your Lordship's most faithful
and obedient servant,
"BOLINGBROKE."*

Bolingbroke added on the back page of this letter, "I send my letter to Mr. Stanhope open. When you have read it, be pleased to seal it with a head, and to

* MS. in the State Paper Office.

send it forward. I trust to your Lordship's goodnature and generosity, as what may infinitely avail me in my present circumstances."

Bolingbroke positively asserts in his letter to Sir William Windham, that he kept the promise he deliberately and repeatedly made to Lord Stair to have nothing to do with the Jacobites. "I saw the Earl of Stair. I promised him that I would enter into no Jacobite engagements, and I kept my word with him." But the Duke of Berwick, the agent of the Jacobites in their correspondence with the court of France, declares as positively that Bolingbroke had a secret interview with him as soon as he arrived in Paris; that he spoke well of the prospects of the Pretender in England; and assured him that he was only restrained by a regard to appearances, at the moment, from giving his open adherence of his attachment to the Jacobite cause.* This obvious discrepancy between Bolingbroke's own assertion, and the statement of the best informed and the most truthful man in the Jacobite interest, has been considered another of those instances of that duplicity which many persons of very different political principles have agreed to ascribe to Bolingbroke's character. It is possible that when he gave those contradictory assurances respectively to Lord Stair and the Duke of Berwick, he had not yet really made up his mind as to what he would do: it certainly does not follow that at the time of his arrival in Paris he had fully decided on embracing the cause of the Pretender. The truth is, that having few positive

* "A son arrivée à Paris," says Berwick, "je le vis en secret, et il me confirma la bonne disposition des affaires en Angleterre; mais, ne croyant pas qu'il convînt encore qu'il se mêlât publiquement des affaires du jeune roi, il se retira à Lyon, d'où après quelques mois, nos amis lui mandèrent qu'il eût à revenir à Paris."—Mémoires du Maréchal de Berwick, édit. Petitôt, ii. 228.

convictions, he was not a man who ever proceeded on any definite plan. His conduct was generally decided by impulse, and not unfrequently the impulse of the moment acting on a very susceptible and passionate nature.

Neither, however, can we justly adopt altogether his own subsequent declaration of the cause why he was driven into the Jacobite ranks. It was, he said, his imprudent resentment of the bill of attainder which his enemies had introduced into Parliament, and the smart of which, he declared, still tingled in his veins.* Nothing is more certain than that he had actually accepted the seals from the hands of the Pretender and acted as his Secretary of State, before the bill of attainder was brought into the House of Commons, and before even Bolingbroke had actually been impeached in Parliament. This important fact can be clearly established by a reference to dates.

After spending a few days in Paris he retired quietly to Lyons. At the beginning of July, as he says, he was summoned from his retreat on the Rhone by a message from the leading Tories in England. He repaired, on this command, immediately to Commercy in Lorraine; had there an interview with the Pretender, and was by him prevailed upon to accept the seals. He returned to Paris as the minister of James to prosecute the Jacobite interest with the French government; and his first letter to James, in the unedited Stuart Papers, from Paris, giving an

* "The act of attainder, in consequence of my impeachment, had passed against me for crimes of the blackest dye; and among other inducements to pass it, my having been engaged in the Pretender's interest, was one."—The Letter to Sir W. Windham. The same statement is still more positively repeated in the twenty-fourth of Bolingbroke's Letters or, as he calls them, Remarks on the History of England.

account of his arrival, and what he was doing, as the Jacobite Secretary of State, is dated the 23rd of July, corresponding with the 12th of July according to the English style. This date shows clearly, that, before the month of July ended, Bolingbroke had heartily thrown himself into the Jacobite cause. Now, it was not until the 4th of August that the articles of impeachment against Bolingbroke were reported by Walpole to the House of Commons; it was not until the 6th that Bolingbroke was impeached by Walpole at the bar of the Lords; it was not until after that ceremony, and the message, in consequence, from the peers informing the Commons that Bolingbroke had left England, that the bill of attainder was brought in; it was not until the 18th of August that the bill was read a third time by the Lords; and it was not until the middle of September that, by Bolingbroke's own default, it came into effect as a law of the land.

When Bolingbroke retired to St. Clair, near Vienne, in Dauphiny, where he met again unexpectedly the Abbé de Tencin and the young son of Madame de Ferriole, he was still in an uncertainty as to his future conduct. To him the House of Hanover and the House of Stuart, so far as they represented any principle, were nothing. But by the one he was now persecuted, and by the other he was courted. Jacobite emissary after Jacobite emissary pursued him, full of the most sanguine hopes of an immediate restoration. As long as he trusted to his own observation of what had passed before his eyes in England, he was not deceived; but he had not been two months abroad when he began to suffer from the malady of exile. Every rumour from his native country hostile to the new dynasty was grossly exaggerated; every outbreak of dissatisfaction from the Tories

at the ascendancy of the Whigs was regarded as an infallible portent of an impending revolution. A demonstration of a High Church mob, for at that time there actually were High Church mobs, was magnified through the medium of distance to the most alarming proportions. Because the late ministers were cheered by the populace on their way home from Parliament, it was assumed that the people were ready to rise and drive George I. from the throne. Many of the Tories in London appear to have shared in this delusion; and to the thorough-paced Jacobites, both at home and abroad, it became an absolute certainty. Bolingbroke was not a Jacobite, but he was a Tory, and an exile; and he, too, was readily inclined to take his wishes for realities. While he was in this state of mind an acquaintance arrived from London, professing to speak in the name of all his friends, assuring him that the Tories had all become Jacobites, that Scotland could scarcely be prevented from breaking into rebellion, that London was in a similar state of excitement, that disaffection pervaded the army, and that discontent with the new government was deep and general. This gentleman had seen the Pretender at Commercy, and brought with him to Bolingbroke a letter from James requesting his assistance. The statesman was assured by this eager emissary that he had but a little time to make up his mind; James would soon have friends enough: the restoration was so certain that, if Bolingbroke hesitated, he might at once and for ever lose all the merit of an early adhesion to a triumphant cause.

Bolingbroke was not fully convinced of the truth of all that he had been told, and was not really influenced by the bill of attainder, which, notwithstanding his

own statement to the contrary, it is certain, as has just been shown, had not yet been brought into parliament, much less passed into a law: yet he took but a few minutes to come to a determination. He immediately went to Commercy in Lorraine, had an interview with the Pretender, knelt at his feet, kissed his hand, and acknowledged him as his sovereign. James pressed him to accept the seals. Would he not be to him all that he had been to his sister? Would he not at once proceed to Paris as Secretary of State, and exert all the influence he had acquired over the French government by his conduct in bringing about the recent peace to induce Torcy and Louis to give the cause they professed to favour effectual assistance? A few troops, some ammunition, and a little money were all that was required, and the blessed work of the Restoration would be done. Whether James appeared in England or Scotland, and, though he was preparing to set out either for one kingdom or the other, he had not yet exactly made up his mind for which, he had but to show himself to be acknowledged as the rightful king. Bolingbroke was still not satisfied. He had had a great experience in affairs, and even in this, his first interview with the Pretender, he was struck with the difference between an actual sovereign and an expectant one, nursing himself with hopes which he construed into certainties. Nevertheless Bolingbroke became Secretary of State to James. He afterwards declared, however, that no sooner had he accepted the seals than he repented of what he had done.* This was scarcely the temper of mind in which a statesman could hope to carry out successfully a most arduous undertaking.

He was still less satisfied on proceeding, after this

* The Letter to Sir W. Windham.

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interview, from Commercy to Paris. Some small vessels were privately fitting out to aid the attempt about to be made by the unfortunate heir of the Stuarts to regain the kingdoms of his ancestors. But instead of the business being kept a secret, Bolingbroke found that it was the common talk of tea-tables. Every exile considered himself a Jacobite minister, and bound to give advice which ought to be followed. Of all James's adherents, the Irish were the most busy, restless, and talkative. Bolingbroke was, however, an English statesman, and had no sympathy with the Irish priests and adventurers. Their object was not his: he believed that their councils were most pernicious: and he began to feel for them a contempt which he was at no pains to conceal. The same jealousy which had broken out between the English and Irish Jacobites, even when King James was in Ireland, the year after the Revolution, had continued to exist in the mimic court of St. Germains; and at this period, when it seemed that a restoration was near, the animosity between the two factions became greater than ever. As Bolingbroke, from the exalted position he had filled, and the great reputation he possessed, was at once regarded as the chief of the English Jacobites in France, so he became the especial object of the hostility of Jesuit confessors, wandering friars, and the Hibernian Macs and O's, who regarded themselves as the only faithful assertors of the Jacobite cause, and looked upon every Englishman, and especially every Englishman who was not a Catholic, as an intruder and an enemy.* This was a state of things which Bolingbroke had never imagined as possible. He had been a real minister in

* The Duke of Berwick repeatedly says that Bolingbroke was intensely hated by the Irish.—See the Mémoires, *passim*.

a real court, where, of course, intrigues and jealousies were to be found; but to be, after such an elevation, the mock minister in a mock court, and to be as much the butt of jealousy and intrigue as though he had still been the Secretary of State to Queen Anne, was terrible to his proud and haughty spirit. "Into such company," he said, "had I fallen for my sins." Bolingbroke dined with Torcy, who himself, as an actual minister, exercising real power, had long had a great contempt for these Jacobite adventurers of all denominations with such cross projects, loud boastings, impertinent meddling, and airs of mysterious consequence. He received his late friend, the Secretary to Queen Anne, now the Secretary to the Pretender, on a more respectful footing; but he would not undertake that the Pretender should receive the efficient aid he desired.

In the very first letter which Bolingbroke wrote to James, giving him an account of his progress in these negotiations at Paris, it is remarkable that we find his dissatisfaction with his Jacobite associates very plainly expressed. The style of this epistle is curious, beginning, as it does, with as much respectful formality as though the Pretender had actually been settled as a reigning sovereign at St. James'. It is dated from Paris, the 23rd of July (N.S.), and begins thus:—

"SIR,—Your servants at this place judging it impossible by letter to set matters in so full and just a light before your eyes as the nicety and importance of the present conjuncture require, the bearer of these packets has the honour to attend your Majesty. I think it, however, my duty to make a deduction of what has passed since my arrival here, to point out to

your Majesty the mischiefs and the causes of them, which your service labours under; and the remedies which appear necessary and in your power to take.

"The day I arrived I saw Mr. In(nes), and put into his hands all that you had been pleased to intrust me with. I soon found a general expectation gone abroad that your Majesty was to undertake somewhat immediately; and I was not a little concerned to hear, in two or three places, and among women over their tea, that arms were provided and ships got ready; but I confess I was struck with concern when I knew in such a manner as is to be depended upon, and as I beg your Majesty to depend upon, that the factor of Lawrence (King George) in this country knew of the little armament, and had sent advices of it home; that the court in Maryland (England) were in the resolution of conniving till the enterprize should be gone upon, and made no doubt, by this means, of crushing the whole at once; that ships are cruising on the coast, and that they are under private orders to observe, and even to search, when that shall appear necessary, all vessels which pass. I was preparing on Sunday to send your Majesty these accounts, and to despatch Mr. Buik, when Mr. In(nes) came to me, and brought with him a man who had delivered your Majesty's letter to him, and the note you was pleased to write to me. Mr. In(nes) told me, at the same time, that though he was referred by you, sir, to this person for the particulars of the message which he brought, yet that he could get nothing distinct nor material out of him; that he seemed very unwilling to come to me, but that he had obliged him to it, and hoped I should be better informed by him."*

* Stuart Papers: Bolingbroke to the Pretender, July $\frac{23}{12}$, 1715.

The letter proceeds, at more length than it is desirable to quote, to give Bolingbroke's account of an interview with the Jacobite emissary. He turned out to be a certain Irish friar, a Dominican, called Father Callaghan, who declared that he was commissioned by the Duke of Ormond to tell James to set out at once for England. Bolingbroke examined this man for an hour, and considered him totally unworthy of confidence. Torcy and Berwick, when informed of the circumstance, confirmed Bolingbroke's distrust. They all agreed in advising James not to put faith in the words of such a messenger delivering such a message.

James replied immediately to Bolingbroke's letter. He was struck by the complaining manner in which the statesman had alluded to the Jacobite agents, and was anxious to make him some amends for a disappointment which he evidently felt. The Pretender therefore enclosed to Bolingbroke a patent raising him a step higher in the peerage. "I cannot, you know," wrote James, wishing to be very gracious, "as yet give you very essential proofs of my kindness, but the least I can do for so good and faithful a servant is in sending you the enclosed warrant, which raises you a degree higher than my sister had done before, and which will fix your rank with me beyond dispute."*

Bolingbroke's weakness about his rank had been long known to the Jacobites. The wish of his heart was, however, at last to be gratified; he was henceforth to be Earl of Bolingbroke.

But though James was so condescending and bountiful to his new Secretary of State, yet, like a true Stuart king, he was not any the more inclined to follow his counsellor's advice. Nothing could have been

* Stuart Papers: the Pretender to Bolingbroke, July $\frac{25}{14}$, 1715.

more judicious than Bolingbroke's admonition to him not to put any confidence in the Irish friar's message. "Things," the statesman wrote, "are not yet ripe in England; at least you cannot tell with certainty whether they are so or not; the secret is divulged; in the present method the correspondence wants that preciseness and exactness which is indispensably necessary;" and he had earnestly besought James "to employ such men as have capacity equal to the business, and to whose honour your own safety, and that of so many persons as are concerned, may be trusted."* Yet in direct disregard of the whole tenour of Bolingbroke's letter, James determined to act on Father Callaghan's message, without consulting any further either with Bolingbroke, Torcy, or Berwick, because he knew that all three would disapprove of the step he was about to take. He actually prepared to leave Lorraine without delay, sent an order for a vessel to be fitted out for him at Havre, and commanded Bolingbroke to meet him there on the thirtieth of the month. It was only by the interference of the French court that James was prevented from carrying his intention into effect.†

To find James, at the outset of their relationship as sovereign and minister, prefer the counsels of the obscure friar, Father Callaghan, to those of his new Secretary of State, who had a world-wide reputation, and had made the Peace of Utrecht, besides being generally acknowledged to be the most brilliant Englishman of his time, was no pleasing thought to Bolingbroke. Was not this the very spirit in which James II. had lost three kingdoms? And was it by still trusting to friars and priests of all degrees, rather

* Stuart Papers: Bolingbroke to James, July ⅔, 1715.

† See the Mémoires du Maréchal de Berwick, ii. 232.

than to responsible English statesmen, that his son could hope to regain them? It was such conduct that compelled the French government to put no confidence in the Jacobites; and Bolingbroke found, at the outset, any chance of his negotiation succeeding almost destroyed by this proceeding on the part of James. In the midst of the Secretary's perplexity, dissatisfaction, and sorrow, another messenger, Charles Kinnaird, arrived from England, with a memorial he had learnt by heart from the dictation of the Earl of Mar.

The memorial was in answer to one Bolingbroke had sent over, and became to him a compass by which he endeavoured to steer his course. It stated that troops and arms from France were indispensably necessary; that with such assistance some of the leading Tory gentlemen would undertake to rise; but that it would be better to put off the insurrection until September, when the Parliament would be prorogued, and they would all be dispersed among their friends and tenants in their different counties. It also indicated Plymouth as the place near which it would be best for James to land. Bolingbroke lost no time in copying a portion of this paper into French, and sending it to Torcy. He enclosed the extract in a letter of his own, earnestly beseeching the French government to act upon its recommendations. "I send you, sir," he said, "a memorial which will correctly inform you of the state of our affairs. You will there see the sentiments of our friends very simply expressed, as well as their resolutions. They are not the sentiments of two or three private persons; they are not opinions given in haste; they are not resolutions inspired solely by passion, and liable to be as lightly abandoned. They are, on the contrary, the sentiments of the best hearts

and the best heads in the country whence the memorial comes, founded upon sure observation, and upon a consideration of the state of all parts of the realm. They are opinions taken flegmatically after mature deliberation; they are the resolutions of gentlemen of honour, whose characters will answer for them, as it is known that they are in a state to answer for all the party which is distinguished by the name of Tories. You will not be vexed to see this undertaking miscarry, the ruin of which would involve all the friends France has in England, and deliver that country for ever into the hands of its fiercest enemies. It only depends on the King to insure its success: I presume to say that it will be easier for him to restore the son than it was for the States of Holland to restore the father."* But all Bolingbroke's eloquence could not persuade the court of France to openly patronize the Jacobites, and brave the anger of the English government. He was obliged, in reply to the memorial, to write that the demands it contained could not be complied with; and that they would have to be very much reduced before there was any likelihood of the old King and his ministers giving any assistance whatever. Some time afterwards, a second memorial was sent to him, with the application of the Tories for succour much diminished. They gave up all hopes of obtaining a body of French troops, and only besought a supply of arms and ammunition.

But even these were then not easily to be obtained from the French government. Bolingbroke's earnest importunities had had very little effect. Louis, very

* This letter, endorsed, A Copie de la Lettre de Milord Bolingbroke à M. de Torcy, is among the unedited Stuart Papers: it was written originally in French.

much shaken in his bodily health, and no longer possessing his usual mental energy, had retired to Marli, where Bolingbroke, in his altered situation, could not, of course, be received. Torcy himself could do nothing, and was not inclined even if he had had the power to do anything. Frenchmen were all looking forward to the King's death and the regency which seemed impending. The Duke of Orleans was courted by Lord Stair, and had, indeed, entered into a private arrangement with George I. not to disturb the English government, that his exercise of the authority of the regency might not be interrupted. He knew that the King had signed a will, leaving the military administration of the kingdom and the guardianship of the young heir to the Duke of Maine; and that, if this arrangement should be carried into effect, Philip's own power as Regent would be merely nominal. Besides, he had in view the eventual succession to the crown, on the likelihood of the dauphin's death. These considerations, which were surely weighty enough, had fully determined him, as well as those who were in his confidence, not to increase the difficulties of his position by the hostility of the reigning sovereign of England. Bolingbroke was, however, too clear-sighted to be altogether deceived: he knew that an understanding was some time before come to between Lord Stair and the Duke of Orleans; and that he could not count on the gay, good-humoured, easy, and dissolute Philip's friendship. In the letter immediately following the one already quoted, from Bolingbroke to James, the English statesman observed: "It is certain that the factor of Leonard (the ambassador of King George) deals with 19, 22, 16, 10, 6, 18, 23 (Orleans). They had, I believe, very lately a private meeting. I gave notice

in the proper place, and took care that it should get to the ears of Humphrey (Orleans)."*

In reply to the letter James expressed some vexation. He had expected when Bolingbroke became his Secretary of State, that all difficulties with the French government would at once have been removed. He had supposed that the personal influence of the minister who had made the peace of Utrecht would have been sufficient for everything; and Bolingbroke's anticipations appear to have been equally confident. They were both, however, deceived. Little was done, and James was both surprised and impatient. Bolingbroke, however, though himself much disappointed, felt that this was no time to despair. He answered the Pretender's letter in a tone of encouragement which he was himself far from feeling. "Impatience, sir, in your circumstances, is unavoidable: and you would not be what you are, were you exempt from it. I wish to God the nature of the affairs we have in hand admitted of so swift a progress as to satisfy this impatience; but that is not to be expected. In the meanwhile, I must be humbly of opinion that they improve every day: and that the event of things will justify the advice given you from Maryland (England)."†

Unfortunately the hopes of both James and Bolingbroke received a few days afterwards a blow from which they scarcely ever entirely recovered. The Duke of Ormond had, up to this time, remained in England, living in almost regal splendour at Richmond, and assuring his Jacobite friends abroad, that he would keep on the spot to the last in order to be ready to act. Bo-

* Bolingbroke to the Pretender, $\frac{\text{Aug. 3,}}{\text{July 23,}}$ 1715; Stuart Papers.

† Bolingbroke to the Pretender, $\frac{\text{Aug. 5,}}{\text{July 25,}}$ 1715; Stuart Papers.

lingbroke had trumpeted the Duke's name loudly in the ears of the French minister. Ormond was more the real sovereign than George I. He had only to show himself in the western counties, and twenty thousand men would at once spring to arms. He had already secretly secured by his agents Bristol and Plymouth. His popularity was great both with the army and the people. He had but to give the word and all England would be immediately illumined with the flames of civil war. Hearing, however, that orders had been given to arrest him, the Duke fled precipitately from Richmond; and instead of making his way to the western counties, where it is possible that he might have made a stand, he crossed over to France alone in a small boat. The man whom Bolingbroke had represented as able to take the crown from the head of George I. and put it on the head of James III., arrived in Paris without money, without friends, and without a single attendant. The French ministers were surprised and disgusted. They began to distrust the representations of Bolingbroke, as they had from long experience distrusted the confident assurances of less eminent Jacobite agents.*

Despairing of active assistance from France, Bolingbroke and Berwick, who then had between them the principal direction of these negotiations in favour of the Pretender, thought of another expedient. This was nothing less than to apply to Charles XII. of Sweden for troops to invade Great Britain. Such an enterprise suited his romantic disposition. His fortunes had failed him on the disastrous day of Pultowa: he had been nearly driven out of his German

* For the effect of Ormond's arrival in such a manner, see the letter to Sir W. Windham. It is sufficiently candid.

provinces; and was considered to have no great love for George I. as a German prince. Having about seven thousand soldiers with transports ready at Gottenburg to proceed to Stralsund, where he was himself beset by his enemies, it was hoped that he might be induced to allow them to sail for either England or Scotland. When Bolingbroke first mentioned the design to Torcy, he laughed at it as chimerical: it was, however, entertained by the Swedish minister at Paris: and out of the Pretender's scanty treasury fifty thousand crowns were actually sent to Gottenburg to defray the expenses of the embarkation. Charles, however, when, after some delay, he was himself consulted about the business, naturally preferred seeing his soldiers at Stralsund, where he wanted them very much. The troops, he said, were cavalry, and, therefore, not adapted for the service, and besides, that George I. had not yet declared himself his enemy. The following year, and at other later periods, he was himself willing to embark in such an enterprise, but a successful descent on England was not always so practicable.*

While this scheme was in agitation, Louis XIV., though he could spare no money himself, wrote with his own hand to his grandson, Philip of Spain, for funds in aid of the Pretender. So far, at least, Bolingbroke succeeded in his negotiations by the middle of August. He afterwards declared that, notwithstanding the aversion of the French government to interfere directly against the new dynasty, Louis XIV. would soon have again heartily embraced the cause of the Stuarts, and been drawn into another war with England.†

* See the Mémoires du Maréchale de Berwick, ii. 235.

† The Letter to Sir W. Windham.

This was now the object of the English statesman who had made the peace of Utrecht.

Just at this time, as Bolingbroke's mind was occupied with these great designs, Madame de Tencin once more appeared on the scene. She had been commissioned by her brother and the Duke of Orleans to get to know from Bolingbroke what the Jacobites were really meditating, just as she had formerly been commissioned by Torcy to discover the extent of Bolingbroke's powers when he came over to France about the peace. Madame again tried all her charms and fascinations. Nothing that the dexterous feminine intriguer could do to discover from Bolingbroke this secret of the Jacobite politics was omitted. She coaxed, she flattered, she inveigled, she professed the most unutterable devotion, and even played her last card by hinting at a marriage between the Pretender and one of the daughters of the Duke of Orleans. But Bolingbroke, though not awakened from his dream of love, was on his guard against the arts of the temptress. Madame's brilliant powers were all exerted in vain. But the proposal of marriage he appears to have contemplated seriously.

He wrote to James an account of his contest with this Parisian enchantress, who was still a divinity in his eyes. The letter well deserves quotation. "I have," he said, "been in commerce with a woman for some time, who has as much ambition and cunning as any woman I ever knew—perhaps as any man. Since my return to Paris, she has, under pretence of personal concern for me, frequently endeavoured to sound how far I was engaged in your service, and whether any enterprise was on foot. Your Majesty hardly

imagines that the answers I gave her were calculated to make her believe that neither I nor any one else thought at present of any such design. A few days ago she returned to the charge, with all the dexterity possible, and made use of all the advantages which her sex gives her. I took that occasion to pretend to open my heart entirely to her, and according to what I writ your Majesty word, I had concerted with Talon, to insinuate the impossibility of attempting anything for your service. She entered upon this into the present state of affairs, in a manner that I could see was premeditated; agreed that in consideration of Harry's [Louis XIV.] age and health, no vigorous resolution could be expected here; but added that Harry's nephew [the Duke of Orleans] when he was once confirmed in the 22, 10, 12, 10, 18, 27 (regency), would undoubtedly be ready to concur in so great an undertaking, and that she did not see why a marriage between you and one of his daughters might not be an additional motive to him, and a tie of union between you. I received the proposal merrily, as a sally of her imagination, and as such she let it pass. But there must be more in it, because of her character, because of the intimacy she has had with 19, 22, 16, 10, 6, 18, 23 (Orleans), and because of the private but strict commerce, which I know she keeps up with one of his confidants, and the influence she has over that man. It is extremely nice and difficult to manage this affair, since particular engagements of this kind might, in many respects, do hurt here and in Maryland [England], might prejudice your affairs now, and embarrass you hereafter. And yet the advantage of gaining a man of that ambition, of those talents, and so nearly

allied to power, deserves great consideration. Your Majesty will excuse this detail, if you judge it impertinent, and you will give me your orders if you think any use may be made of such an intrigue. *I would have even the pleasures of my life subservient to your Majesty's service*, as the labours of it shall be always."*

The Duke of Orleans' confidant with whom Madame de Tencin is said by Bolingbroke to be in so strict a commerce, and over whom she is declared to have so great an influence, was the celebrated or infamous Du Bois. She was to be known as the worthy mistress of this worthy minister, though it was a gallant chevalier who was also, through her, soon to be the father of D'Alembert. Bolingbroke for many years afterwards kept up an intimate correspondence with Madame de Ferriole and her family: he also remained on good terms with the Abbé de Tencin, who was but at the beginning of his career; his passion, however, for Madame de Tencin, with her fine wit and sparkling eyes, was suddenly extinguished. Madame was a little too clever.

At the desire of his friends in England, who had sent him the report of the Committee of Secrecy, Bolingbroke was thinking of shutting himself up for a few days, in order to write an answer to it, a vindication of the late ministry, whose reputation they considered it necessary to maintain. In announcing this intention to James, he wrote in the most encouraging tone. "What I had the honour to foretell you, sir, proves true: this spirit increases, and all the measures taken to extinguish the flame seem but as fresh fuel to make it burn higher. Things are hastening to that point,

* Bolingbroke to the Pretender, Aug. $\frac{15}{4}$, 1715; Stuart Papers.

that either you, sir, at the head of the Tories, must save the Church and Constitution of England, or both must be irretrievably lost for ever."*

The next day, on Torcy enclosing extracts to Bolingbroke from some letters of the French envoy, Iberville, still residing in England, the prospects of the Jacobites seemed yet brighter. Shrewsbury, who could not in honour abandon the Tories when under persecution, was understood to be engaged. There were hopes even of Peterborough; and Marlborough gave polite and ready answers, and, that he might be prepared, as usual, for all contingencies, was willing to advance the Pretender money, just as, in the last year of the Queen's reign, he and Cadogan had offered to raise thirty thousand pounds for the service of the Elector of Hanover in England. Bolingbroke, at these favourable indications, did not pause to consider whether the undoubted discontent of these eminent noblemen, because they were neglected by King George, really meant a hearty intention of rising in arms to drive him from the throne. Thus wrote Bolingbroke, still more confidently, to James: "Your affairs hasten to this crisis; and I hope that, with prudence and fortitude, for they must go hand in hand, your Majesty's restoration will soon be accomplished. Was the conjunction here in any degree answerable to the conjunction in England, you would neither have any risk to run nor struggle to go through. The Duke of Shrewsbury is frankly engaged, and was, the last time I heard of him, very sanguine. I submit to your Majesty whether a letter from yourself to him, or a message through me, would not be proper. As to Peterborough, I think, in-

* Bolingbroke to the Pretender, Aug. $\frac{19}{8}$, 1715; Stuart Papers.

deed, he is not to be neglected. I will write to him, and even offer to meet him. Your Majesty knows his character, and will give me your orders how far he is to be promised. We have always lived together on a footing of intimacy, and perhaps I may succeed to dip him. At present he endeavours, I perceive, to keep on the best side of the bay. May I presume to ask whether something particular has been said to Marlborough? He is at this moment much perplexed and openly pushed at. Should not the Duke of Berwick, at least, by your Majesty's order, in this point of time, endeavour to fix him? An application justly timed has always a double force."*

But while, according to the tenour of the letter just quoted, everything was going on so prosperously for the Jacobite cause, it contained a postscript more than sufficient to counterbalance all the hopes which could be built on Shrewsbury's proverbial fickleness, Peterborough's restless knight-errantry, and Marlborough's habitual duplicity. "The reports from Versailles," Bolingbroke added, before sealing his letter, "vary continually about the King's health. I believe your Majesty must depend upon his life as very precarious." At the time the life of Louis XIV. was indeed precarious. On that very day he had fallen most seriously ill; but he lingered on to the end of the month, and on the 1st of September (N.S.) terminated by his death a strangely chequered, but, on the whole, politic and glorious reign.

With him expired all the hopes of Bolingbroke. The will which the old sovereign had been persuaded to leave, though he was himself convinced that, despotic as he had been for so many years, his wishes would be

* Bolingbroke to the Pretender, Aug. $\frac{?}{?}$, 1715.

disregarded the moment his life should be extinct, was set at nought. The Duke of Orleans became the undisputed ruler of France; and, in a few weeks, a complete change was made in the government. The ministers chosen to preside over the different departments in his Council of Regency were not inclined to favour the late King's policy. Torcy soon retired from the office of Foreign Affairs, and his successor, the Marshal de Huxelles, though personally not unfriendly to Bolingbroke, gave him no hope that he would even indirectly assist to bring about a Jacobite restoration. The great family of Noailles was, indeed, still powerful in the Council of Regency, the Duke of that name having been advanced to the presidentship of the Treasury, and the Cardinal to the presidentship of the Council of Conscience. But a tendency to time-serving has in more ages than one characterized the members of that illustrious family. The Duke of Noailles, after having courted Bolingbroke assiduously during the reign of Louis XIV., not less assiduously shunned him during the regency of Orleans. Berwick, who was a naturalized Frenchman, had expected to be chosen a member of the Council; but the reason the Duke gave for excluding him showed Bolingbroke and the Jacobites very plainly how little they had to expect. Philip declared that the appointment of James II.'s illegitimate son, though a marshal of France, to a high post in the French government, would produce a bad feeling in England; and he politely requested Berwick to excuse the omission, promising to provide for him in some important command.

The whole conduct of the new French government was consistent with this beginning. Lord Stair, the British ambassador, proved himself a very efficient

master of his craft, and between him and the Duke of Orleans the good relationship which had been previously established was, in the delicate circumstances in which they were placed, very satisfactorily maintained. Admiral Byng entered the roads of Havre, and demanded that some ships, which he specified by name, should be given up, as part of a clandestine Jacobite armament. The ships were not actually surrendered; but their arms were taken out and placed in the French magazines, under a promise from the Duke of Orleans that they should not again be employed against the English government. Bolingbroke appears from this time to have really given up all hopes of success; nor can it be said that any rising in Scotland or England received from him the slightest encouragement. He did all that he fairly could to prevent the Jacobites from taking steps which he well knew would be ruinous to themselves.

Torcy, just before leaving office, forwarded to Bolingbroke a reply, from his political friends in England, to the second memorial he had sent over. It stated that they knew not what language to hold until they saw the effect the death of Louis XIV. would have on the French government. This appeared to Bolingbroke to suspend the resolution they had previously declared of rising in September, and left him in a similar state of anxious suspense from which he had been relieved by the former communication. A gentleman arrived from the North nearly at the same time with the information that Scotland was on the point of rising in arms, and that if the Jacobites were then restrained from acting the opportunity would be lost for ever. Thus it seemed, that while in England the friends of the Pretender wished for delay, in Scotland they could not be

withheld from beginning. What did this backwardness on the part of one kingdom, and eagerness on the part of the other, to break into insurrection really portend? To Bolingbroke it foretold nothing less than destruction to the cause. He immediately despatched an emissary to London to inform the Earl of Mar that the English Jacobites had declared they could not rise without assistance from France; that in the circumstances of the French government this assistance was not to be expected; and that, from these two propositions, he might draw his own inference. This inference clearly was that the rebellion should, in both kingdoms, be postponed. But when the gentleman charged with Bolingbroke's message reached London, he found that the earl had already left for Scotland to summon the Highlanders to arms. Why did Mar at once take a step so precipitate? asked Bolingbroke afterwards indignantly.* The fact really was, though Bolingbroke does not appear to have known it, that Mar had obeyed the express orders of the Pretender, transmitted formally to him, without any communication with either Bolingbroke or Berwick, his two principal ministers.†

With this act of gross perfidy on the part of the Pretender to Bolingbroke, the rebellion in Scotland began. The English statesman was placed in a most unhappy situation: he was made responsible for proceedings over which he had no control, and which were under-

* The Letter to Sir W. Windham.

† "Le comte de Mar qui avoit été Secrétaire d'Etat pour l'Ecosse du temps de la reine Anne, et qui en avoit été dépossédé par Georges, reçut au mois de Septembre un ordre secret du roi Jacques de s'en aller dans l'instant en Ecosse, et d'y prendre les armes. Ni Bolingbroke ni moi ne savions rien de ceci, quoique nous fussions ses principaux ministres, par qui toutes les correspondances d'Angleterre et tous les projets passoient; ce qui ne faisoit rien augurer de bon, vu que sans nous il ne pouvoit y avoir rien de concerte."—*Mémoires du Maréchale de Berwick*, ii. 246.

taken against his clearest judgment. In obedience to another message of the English Jacobites, James set out from Lorraine for the coast, with the intention of crossing over the Channel, and to land in the west of England. But the vigour of the government in arresting the principal Jacobite leaders, including Sir William Windham, rendered a rising in the western counties fruitless. The Duke of Ormond made two attempts to land: on one occasion he was denied a night's lodging in the country whose crown, he had been led to believe, was at his disposal; and on the other he was driven back by a storm, and by this means, in Bolingbroke's opinion, only saved from a more disastrous fate.*

While James was about to make this attempt in person to regain the kingdom of his ancestors, his Secretary of State had other mortifications to endure. The declaration which Bolingbroke had drawn up for the unfortunate young man, to be published on his landing, was deliberately altered by the Roman Catholics about him, and the positive assurances which the English statesman had put into his mouth to maintain all the privileges and immunities of the Churches of England and Ireland were quite changed. Sentence after sentence which Bolingbroke had written, in the true spirit of a statesman, to give satisfaction to the Tory country gentlemen, were turned into feeble platitudes, that the scruples of the Jesuits and women who considered themselves the only proper advisers of the Pretender, might be respected. As we read the account of their conduct on this business in the concluding portion of the letter to Sir W. Windham, we might not unnaturally suspect that Bolingbroke, acting on his resentments, was inclined to exaggerate the suicidal bigotry

* The Letter to Sir W. Windham.

and folly of James and his Roman Catholic counsellors. It is only justice, however, to the statesman to acknowledge, that, from the unquestionable evidence of the Stuart Papers, his remonstrances on this question with James were, at the time when these alterations were made, quite as strong as it was possible for them to be, and were delivered with the utmost manliness and freedom. "I own to your Majesty," he wrote, "that the alterations made in the draught are strong objections with me against putting my name to it. No name whatever will hinder men whose jealousies on that head run very high, from observing that there is no promise made in favour of the Church of Ireland, and that even the promise which relates to the Church of England is very ambiguous, and liable to more than one interpretation. In that case my name will do your Majesty's cause no service, and my credit will suffer by it. But if, in the first heat of things, other expressions, which, to avoid being tedious, I omit, be observed, yet hereafter they will be taken notice of; and it is easy to foresee that, in all disputes which may arise about settling the government upon your restoration, the declarations you shall have published will be the test to which all parties will resort. In this case, sir, I should not be able to answer it to the world, or to my own conscience, if my name had in any degree contributed to weaken that security which all your friends expect, and will certainly insist upon, both for the Church of England and for that of Ireland. I serve your Majesty with an entire zeal, and upon that bottom which can alone restore you and the monarchy. Was I to go off from that bottom, which I am incapable of, I should become useless to you."*

* Bolingbroke to the Pretender, $\frac{\text{Nov. 2,}}{\text{Oct. 22,}}$ 1715; Stuart Papers.

At this time the fate of Ormond's embarkation was not yet known. James was proceeding by circuitous routes, and in disguise, to the sea-shore. Lord Stair had his emissaries out in every road, determined, if possible, to oblige the Regent to put a stop to the Pretender's journey. Bolingbroke was left at Paris to solicit assistance from the French government. This duty he diligently performed, though he was suffering, for the first time in his life, from something very much like a fit of the gout, and could scarcely bear the motion of a carriage over the rough stones of Paris.

As he was spending day after day in almost hopelessly soliciting the Marshal de Huxelles, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, for some effectual assistance to the Scotch insurgents, he received a note requesting him to call at a house in the Bois de Boulogne. Thither the Duke of Ormond had, while living with Bolingbroke, and sharing his purse and his bed, been accustomed to resort with every precaution for secrecy. Himself a man of gallantry and intrigue, Bolingbroke was too keen-sighted not to learn something of the Duke's mysterious journeys. He had his doubts whether the visits were indeed for business or pleasure; but suspected that they partook of both. They were to a mistress, Olive Trant, who resided with a Mademoiselle de Chaussery, whom she had introduced to the Duke of Orleans. The Abbé de Tencin, Philip's secretary, was also a member of this conclave; as, indeed, whenever there was anything questionable going on, it was next to impossible for the Abbé not to appear in it; and through them the Duke of Ormond had indirectly been negotiating in the hope of being more successful than Bolingbroke was through the recognized channel of the Minister for Foreign

Affairs. Olive Trant, after accompanying the Duke in some portion of his journey to the coast, had returned to the little house in the Bois de Boulogne. It was she who then sent for Bolingbroke, and undertook, with her friend Mademoiselle de Chaussery, to induce the Duke of Orleans to grant all that the Jacobites desired. Bolingbroke making no way with the real ministers, thought that there was no harm in trying what could be done through these pretended ones. At first he seemed to make greater progress than he had ever been able to accomplish in the proper manner. A note was shown to him from the Regent ostensibly written to a woman, but understood to be addressed to the Earl of Mar. Bolingbroke, however, soon met with obstacles which were not to be overcome by feminine importunity. Under no circumstances could he obtain the delivery of the eight thousand stand of arms which had been promised to the Duke of Ormond. The reason which was given for this refusal gave Bolingbroke even still less satisfaction. He was told by these female managers that the Regent entertained personal prejudices against himself, and that he suspected him of being in communication with Lord Stair, in whose house he was stated to have been very recently, and had not left until three o'clock the next morning. Bolingbroke, highly indignant, consulted Berwick, who went to the Regent and requested him to give the English statesman an opportunity of justifying himself from such serious accusations. The Duke of Orleans replied that a circumstantial story about Bolingbroke's visit to Lord Stair's house had been told him by persons whom he had considered trustworthy; that he had, however, since been convinced it was false; that he had the best intentions respecting Bolingbroke; but

that he had been greatly surprised at being teased at his instigation by women who were not fit to be trusted with any business, when he could have applied directly to him through the Marshal de Huxelles. To Bolingbroke himself, in an interview he had soon afterwards, the Regent expressed himself in similar terms. The truth was that the Duke of Orleans wished to keep Bolingbroke at a distance, because he was not a man to be deceived by promises of assistance which Philip had neither the inclination nor perhaps the power to perform.*

Bolingbroke promptly discontinued his visits at Mademoiselle de Chaussery's. The Duke of Ormond returned from his unsuccessful attempt to land in England, and though Bolingbroke and he still lived together, they no longer met with the same cordiality. Bolingbroke had, during the Duke's absence, been let into the secret of the little house in the Bois de Boulogne, which ought not to have been a secret between them at all. The Duke never, indeed, seems to have acted with any frankness towards Bolingbroke. Even when Ormond was corresponding with Marshal Berwick in the last year of the Queen's reign, he had never opened his mind to the Secretary of State. "I never was in the secret when we were in England," said Bolingbroke; and the Memoirs of Berwick show that this statement was correct, though Coxe, the biographer of Walpole, asserts the contrary. In France, Ormond acted towards Bolingbroke with similar reserve. The Duke was, in fact, an insignificant person, spoiled by vanity and flattery. To his illustrious descent from the noblest of the cavaliers, he

* See the Letter to Sir W. Windham, in which this affair is very minutely related.

owed the respectful attachment of the Tories; but this eminence was in no respect due to his own abilities. He was jealous and punctilious, expecting to be treated with almost royal honours, looking upon himself as the main support of the Jacobite cause, and somewhat envious of the position which Bolingbroke occupied as the Pretender's Secretary of State, though there was, indeed, little in Bolingbroke's position, at that time, to be envied. To be a statesman, Ormond had no pretensions. His friends might persuade him that he was a great general, but of his military qualifications the Duke of Berwick, a very competent judge, spoke with contempt. He was a little, thick-set, bull-headed nobleman, reserved without prudence, and bashful without modesty; careless, and licentious; without decision and without capacity; relying always upon others; and yet without that distrust of himself from which an habitual reliance upon others might be expected to proceed.

Bolingbroke and Ormond, though they still continued for a time to live together, were, after the Duke's return to Paris, soon on somewhat distant terms. Some years ago, a house which they were believed to have inhabited near Paris, was being pulled down, and a secret horde of gold coin was discovered by the workmen. This treasure was supposed to belong to the Jacobites, and to have been hidden by the Duke and Bolingbroke. Although, however, this statement went the round of the French newspapers, whether the money really found was ever secreted by the two English noblemen may very reasonably be doubted. The Pretender's treasury was not so rich that gold could be so easily spared; Ormond's necessities were great, he being always, what Swift called him, an expensive man; and though Bolingbroke had still with

him a considerable supply of ready money, he certainly had none to spare. He was afterwards accused of squandering on a mistress the sums advanced to him by James to buy arms and powder.* He could scarcely have forgotten had he secreted any of it in the wainscot or ceiling of his house. A portion of the money which was really obtained from Spain for the Pretender was shipped by Bolingbroke for Scotland and was lost with the vessel on the coast.

To Scotland James, after many delays, had at last gone. He only arrived, however, in the December of the year 1715, and his presence there could do little good. The battle of Sheriffmuir had been fought; the northern insurrection in England had been put down; the Earl of Mar had displayed his incapacity, and lost the most valuable time in listless inaction at Perth; the Highlanders were going off in bodies to their mountains; and the strength of the insurrection was gradually wasting away. The letter which Bolingbroke received from James, after he had arrived in Scotland, is not destitute of a certain sort of pathos. "I am at last," he wrote from Peterhead, "thank God! in my own ancient kingdom, as the bearer will tell you, with all the particulars of my passage, and his own proposals of future service. Send the Queen the news I have got here, and give a line to the Regent, *en attendant*, that I send you from the army a letter from our friends, to whom I am going to-morrow. I find things in a prosperous way; I hope all will go well, if friends on your side do their part as I shall have done mine. My compliments to Magine; tell him the good news. I don't write to him for I am wearied, and won't delay a moment the bearer.—J. R."

* Lord Stair to Horace Walpole, March 3, N.S., 1716.

James wrote cheerfully; but he affected a confidence he was far from feeling. Something more was necessary than to land in Scotland to win back the British crown. He was not able to reach his army so soon as he expected, and when he did arrive at Perth he found only four thousand men under his standard. "Had I retarded," he said, "some days longer, I might in all probability have had a message not to come at all."* James was dissatisfied with his troops, and his troops were dissatisfied with him. In his correspondence with Bolingbroke, he, however, declared that he would not abandon Perth without blows; that he expected the Lords Huntly and Seaforth would scatter his enemies in the north; expressed his hopes that the French government would at once send him a number of arms, the fine Irish regiments in the French service, and Marshal Berwick to take the command; and he also earnestly desired that the Duke of Ormond might make a diversion either in England or Scotland.† In not one single respect did the facts correspond with the unfortunate young man's wishes. As soon as Cadogan and Argyle advanced with King George's army from Stirling, Mar abandoned Perth. The Lords Huntly and Seaforth were, at the very time when James was writing, seeking to make peace with the government. The French government sent neither arms, Irish regiments, nor Marshal Berwick: and Berwick, feeling that as a naturalized subject, and a French marshal, his first duty was to France, declined to proceed to Scotland without the express orders of the Duke of Orleans. Berwick perhaps acted rightly for his own interest; between him and the Pretender there was no love; and yet

* The Pretender to Bolingbroke, Dec. $\frac{23}{11}$, 1715.

† The Pretender to Bolingbroke, Jan. $\frac{1}{12}$, 1716.

this was a time when the phlegmatic marshal, with his stern virtues, might have risked something. Never was a skilful general more needed than by James's little army; Berwick's military skill was undisputed, and the influence of his name was great. Mar did nothing and there is no reason to believe that, under any circumstances, he could have done much.

Bolingbroke's despatches were anxiously expected by James. Scarcely one, however, reached him, and he could not understand why they did not arrive. Surely the English statesman wrote by every opportunity: surely he was doing his best to urge the French government to send assistance: "The Duke of Mar's letters, and the bearer's relation, will supply my not entering into details. Surely the Regent will not abandon us all, or, rather, will not be quite blind to his own interest. Nothing will be neglected, I am sure, on your side. You will know the whole truth, and then make the best use of it." This was the last of James's letters which Bolingbroke received from Scotland. It was dated from Montrose on the 3rd of February; and in the afternoon of the following day, both the Pretender and the Earl of Mar privately stole out at a back door at that port, went on board a vessel in the roads, and set sail for France, leaving their deserted army to its fate.

A week afterwards James landed at Gravelines. He then proceeded to meet the Queen-mother at St. Germains, and was there waited upon by Bolingbroke. James was all smiles, thanks, and embraces. Not one whisper did he utter of dissatisfaction at any portion of his Secretary of State's conduct. It appeared, that whatever might be their misfortunes, their fates would be inseparable. Bolingbroke, by the advice of the

French Minister for Foreign Affairs, advised James to lose no time in setting out for Bar, that he might arrive before the Duke of Lorraine could be informed of his intention, and thus afford him an excuse to the English government for again allowing him to reside in his dominions. Unless this step were immediately taken, it seemed that James would have to go to Avignon, or perhaps beyond the Alps; and such a retreat must be in the highest degree disadvantageous to his cause. James, however, was in no hurry to leave France, and he asked to see the Regent. He sent Bolingbroke back to Paris to request this interview, which, however, the Duke of Orleans had no disposition to grant. Bolingbroke returned to St. Germains with the refusal; and James then declared that he would set out the next day, ordered his coach to be ready at five o'clock, gave Bolingbroke some commissions, asked him when he could be ready to follow, and with every expression of friendship and confidence, parted from him at three o'clock on a Monday morning.

But James did not set out for Lorraine. He went privately to the little house in the Bois de Boulogne, where the female politicians were assembled. There he had interviews with the Spanish and Swedish ambassadors, and assumed an air of great mystery and business: but his principal occupation was to listen to the complaints of Miss Trant and Mademoiselle de Chaussery against Bolingbroke. The English statesman had incurred the bitterest hatred of these women by ceasing to hold any communication with them after his explanation with the Regent. They accused him loudly of treachery and incapacity. The Duke of Ormond wishing to be Secretary of State, and the Earl of Mar, to

excuse his utter want of generalship, joined in the cry against the obnoxious minister. Ormond had told Mar of some disrespectful expressions against James, let fall by Bolingbroke when he was drunk. In James's presence Mar asked Ormond what the words actually were, and the Duke, with seeming reluctance, at last repeated them by the Pretender's command. James fell into a great passion. He wrote two notes, one summarily dismissing Bolingbroke, in the brief emphatic style of a powerful sovereign, and the other ordering him to give up to Ormond all the papers of his office. Bolingbroke at once delivered up the seals and such papers as he could readily find; others, and particularly some reflecting on Ormond's capacity in the Pretender's own writing, the dismissed minister sent him by another agent. This occurred on the Thursday after Bolingbroke's last interview with James, and the papers were dated on the Friday, that, with the hint Ormond threw out, Bolingbroke might believe them to have been written on the road to Lorraine, though James was all the time at the house in the Bois de Boulogne, and Bolingbroke was well aware of the fact.*

Thus ended Bolingbroke's connection with the Stuarts. The faults and errors of his political career I have not attempted to conceal in the course of this narrative: but it is scarcely possible to consider the treatment he received from James and his adherents without feeling shame and indignation. To his country Bolingbroke might be guilty: to the Pretender he was at least innocent. The accusation of

* See the Letter to Sir W. Windham. The Notes written by the Pretender dismissing Bolingbroke are still among the manuscript Stuart Papers; many of those papers relating to Bolingbroke have been printed by Lord Mahon in the Appendix to the first volume of his History.

treachery scarcely deserves an answer. When Lord Stair first heard of Bolingbroke's dismissal, he appears to have felt for him something like compassion. "The true Jacobite project," wrote the ambassador to his friend, Horace Walpole, "has been at last discovered, and they imagine nobody would tell it but Bolingbroke, who, they have now, as they say, clearly discovered, has all along betrayed them; and so poor Harry is turned out from being Secretary of State, and the seals are given to Mar; and they use poor Harry most unmercifully, and call him knave, and traitor, and God knows what. I believe all poor Harry's fault was that he could not play his part with a grave enough face: he could not help laughing now and then at such kings and queens. He had a mistress here at Paris; and got drunk now and then; and he spent the money upon his mistress that he should have bought powder with, and neglected buying and sending the powder and arms, and never went near the Queen; and in one word told Lord Stair all their designs, and was had out of England for that purpose. I would not have you laugh, Mr. Walpole, for all this is very serious."* How amusing to the Whigs, and all true adherents of the House of Hanover like my Lord Stair and the Walpoles, to hear of such folly on the part of the Stuarts! And to what a depth had Bolingbroke fallen in the twenty months which had elapsed since the death of Queen Anne, to have thus become at once an object of laughter and pity to his political enemies!

The Duke of Berwick, in a very different tone, is equally explicit on Bolingbroke's innocence, and indignant at the manner in which his services had been requited. "I was, in fact, a witness," wrote Berwick,

* Lord Stair to Horace Walpole, March 3, 1716; Coxe's Walpole, ii. 307.

"how Bolingbroke acted for King James whilst he managed his affairs, and I owe him the justice to say, that he left nothing undone of what he could do, he moved heaven and earth to obtain supplies, but was always put off by the court of France; and though he saw through their pretexts, and complained of them, yet there was no other power to which he could apply." * On the folly of dismissing in such a manner the only English statesman capable of directing the Pretender's business with any degree of success, Berwick wrote with similar plainness. Had it been pointed out to Bolingbroke, that owing to the coldness which existed between him and Ormond, they could not act any longer together, "I know enough of Bolingbroke's character," added Berwick, "to be convinced that he would at once have resigned his seals of office." James, however, thought fit to dismiss him with every possible affront. In seeking, however, to destroy Bolingbroke's character, the young man effectually ruined his own cause. What other statesman, who had anything to lose, would devote himself to the scanty fortunes of the Stuarts at the risk of receiving similar treatment? Who again would seek to put his life and reputation at the mercy of fools, adventurers, monks, and Jesuits, the Mademoiselle de Chausserys, and Olive Trants?

Bolingbroke had managed to become obnoxious to nearly all the Jacobites of every class and degree with whom he had been associated during the last few months. The hatred of the Irish was intense: they hated Bolingbroke because they hated England. Of the enmity of the female politicians in the Bois de Boulogne it is also easy to account for: he had slighted them, and they reviled him: and, however contemptible

* Mémoires du Maréchal de Berwick.

they really were, they managed to prejudice against him both the Duke of Orleans and the Pretender. Mary of Modena at St. Germains was equally indignant at Bolingbroke. He had not consulted her, or cared to inform her of all that was being done for the Jacobite cause, because he knew very well that Mary of Modena was quite incapable of keeping a secret.* Then there were Mar and Ormond, who could not pretend to rival Bolingbroke as statesmen, and yet were eager to see him removed. Berwick, indeed, was the only man of eminence engaged in the Stuart cause with whom Bolingbroke appears to have remained on friendly terms; and Berwick was almost as much disliked by the Pretender himself as Bolingbroke; and for a very similar reason: he had a character to maintain, and saw clearer, and acted wiser than the miserable knot of adventurers in every rank, condition, and sex who set up to be ministers and advisers of James. Bolingbroke and Berwick remained on good terms to the last. The Memoirs of this stern and intrepid son of James II. and Arabella Churchill contain the most trustworthy defence of Bolingbroke's conduct at this time; and when, nearly twenty years afterwards, the news reached England that Berwick had been killed at the siege of Philipsburg, Bolingbroke took the opportunity in the Craftsman, of paying an eloquent tribute to the memory of this gallant soldier of fortune, who, through the errors of his family, had neither home nor country, yet lived a life without stain, and died in the profession he ennobled.

* For the manner in which the unfortunate Queen of James II. allowed important matters, which it was of the highest moment to conceal, to become known to everybody, see the Souvenirs of Madame de Caylus.

CHAPTER XIII.

1716—1725.

EXILE AND ISOLATION.

It was now that Bolingbroke experienced all the terrible meaning of the word exile. While he had remained the minister of the Pretender, he had at least been so much occupied with business as to be prevented from dwelling exclusively on his own misfortunes; and for a time his mind had been buoyed up by the excitement of the struggle and the hope of vengeance. The struggle was over, and vengeance had become the portion of his adversaries. His most inveterate foes could not wish him a more unhappy fate than that which he had to endure. After the great position he had filled in the reign of Anne, after negotiating the peace of Utrecht, after being the leader of a great party, and at last, with the highest favour of his sovereign, the virtual Prime Minister of England, it was a fall indeed even to be the mimic Secretary of State to a mimic king. But to be the discarded and reviled secretary of this pretended sovereign, after having been a mock minister, to have to defend himself from a mock impeachment, was worse than even to suffer a real impeachment at Westminster, or even to

expiate his faults and errors on Tower Hill. He had fled from England because he thought the Whigs were determined to bring him to the scaffold: but the Pretender and the Jacobites were not satisfied without making him at once odious and ridiculous. The whole world appeared against him. To whom could he appeal for justice? To his political enemies in England? or to the Tories, who were at least half Jacobites, and who could scarcely doubt the assertions of the Pretender and his counsellors? Driven from his native land, stripped of his estate and honours, the Jacobites now seemed eager to rob Bolingbroke even of everything he had left, his reputation as a statesman and his personal honour. On whatever side he turned his eyes, there seemed nothing before him but blank, hopeless ruin.

Immediately after his dismissal he retired to a private lodging, which he had for some time kept a secret from all but two or three of his most intimate acquaintances. He remained in this obscure retreat for a fortnight, wishing to avoid all the gossip of the most gossiping city in the world. At the end of that time, however, Berwick came to him one evening and informed him that it was necessary to show himself, as the Jacobites were circulating all kinds of slander respecting the cause of his dismissal from their master's service. He was accused of treachery, of imbecility, of every crime a minister could commit: and all Paris was busy execrating his name. In compliance with the advice of the friendly marshal, Bolingbroke immediately appeared again in society. The calumnies which had so suddenly risen in his absence, died as suddenly when opposed to the personal influence of his presence. It was impossible for those who had seen him labouring so zealously for the Pretender in

France, long to credit the shameful accusations of which he was now the object.

Among the Tories and Jacobites in England, the effect of these slanders was not so easily destroyed. Bolingbroke could not cross the channel; he could give no explanations by word of mouth; the poison rapidly spread, and the antidote was not easily administered. He was soon informed that among the Jacobites in England his name was reviled as much as by the Jacobites in France. By his orders his honest private secretary, John Brinsden, who had followed him into exile, and was sharing his misfortunes, wrote four letters, answering the more prominent of the accusations. These letters produced replies, and there seemed, in April, a prospect of a controversy which might occasion some very extraordinary revelations.* The cry of obloquy, however, ceased in England almost as suddenly as in France, while Bolingbroke was himself meditating a more serious defence of his conduct as Secretary of State to the Pretender.

After Bolingbroke's first indignation had subsided at his peremptory dismissal from the Pretender's service, and the calumnies which had been raised against him by the Pretender's agents, he began characteristically to make the best of his situation. He thought it not so bad as at first sight it had appeared. He had himself meditated giving up the seals, believing that the insurrection headed by the Earl of Mar in Scotland, and the unfortunate attempts to rise in England, had been the last struggle of the Tories for power, and that the game was irretrievably lost. On the whole, therefore, the Pretender had done him a service

* These Letters may be seen in Tindal's Continuation of Rapin, ii. 477, fol. edit.

in dismissing him with ignominy. None could now accuse him of interested fickleness in leaving the cause of the Stuarts. They had themselves driven him away; he had not abandoned them, they had abandoned him; he was justified in the face of the whole world in having done with them for ever. The insight he had gained into the interior of the Pretender's court had convinced him of the hopelessness of the struggle in which the Jacobites were engaged; and it was with a feeling of relief that he began to contemplate the abrupt dissolution of his alliance with the unfortunate Stuarts. He was once more a free man, and determined never more to involve himself in such a galling bondage. Mary of Modena sent him a message, stating that his dismissal had been effected without her knowledge, and expressing her hopes that a reconciliation might yet take place between him and her son. "May my arm rot off if I ever use my sword or my pen in their service again!" was Bolingbroke's indignant reply.*

He was beginning to look homeward. He was resolved to take the first opportunity of making his peace with the English government. He had not long to wait before the opportunity of coming to some terms of accommodation was afforded him. He tells us himself that, even while he was in the service of the Pretender, Lord Stair had been authorized to propose a return to his allegiance to the House of Hanover; and that even the Duke of Orleans had also offered personally to interest himself in this business.† How far these statements were justified by facts it is not easy to ascertain. That, however, after Boling-

* Diary of the Earl of Waldegrave referred to by Coxe in his Walpole, i. 200.

† The Letter to Sir W. Windham.

broke's dismissal from the Pretender's service, the first overtures were actually made by Lord Stair, as the agent of the English government, and that he was authorized to make them, before Bolingbroke had himself made any advances at all, I find confirmed by the most satisfactory evidence. The quarrel with the Pretender was known to Lord Stair, and through him to his government at home, almost as soon as it occurred. It is noticed immediately in the manuscript correspondence between the ambassador and Lord Stanhope, the Secretary of State, which I have read in the State Paper Office. On the 28th of March, Stanhope wrote to Stair in the following terms, which certainly fully prove what Bolingbroke affirmed, and his enemies afterwards denied, that the British ambassador was empowered to come to an understanding with him, and offer, from the King and ministry, to reverse his attainder :—

"We cannot tell what judgment to make here of the late Lord Bolingbroke's situation, but we have heard that the Jacobites have been a good deal alarmed at the reports of his disgrace, and expressed a good deal of apprehension lest he should return hither and tell all. Your Lordship is best able to judge what temper of mind he may be in ; and if he be in the disposition some imagine, your Lordship cannot do better service to the King than by finding ways to improve it. The King depends so much upon your address in this, that he authorizes you to give all suitable hope and encouragement, if you shall see occasion."*

After receiving this despatch, Lord Stair sent a message to Bolingbroke, requesting him to call at the

* Stanhope to Stair, 28th March, 1716, MS. in the State Paper Office. Foreign Correspondence, France, No. 349.

embassy. Bolingbroke had a long and friendly interview, for an hour and a half, with Stair; and the manner in which he could be restored was fully discussed. The exiled statesman declared himself most anxious and determined to return to his duty towards his King and country. Nothing, he declared, could shake his resolution, even though King George were to refuse to pardon him. He was ready, even if he could be useful to co-operate with Lord Stair in France. "My Lord," he said to the ambassador, with fervour, "you know my character. I am not accustomed to do things by halves. In returning to my duty, I propose to serve my King and country with zeal and affection. To accomplish this purpose, I shall believe myself obliged by every act of duty, of gratitude, of honour, and of interest, to inform the King of all that my experience may suggest for the establishment of the public tranquillity, and to frustrate all the designs which may be formed in favour of his enemies. I shall do all that I can to make the Tories who have embraced the Pretender's cause return to their duty, in letting them see what kind of a man this Pretender is, and how they deceive themselves if they think that, with him, they can have any security for their liberties or their religion. To do this, however, it is necessary, even for his Majesty's service, that I should not lose my reputation nor pass for an informer." On this point Bolingbroke was most earnest. "What I propose to do," he added, "is worthy of an honest man, convinced of his error, and truly penitent. It is what I shall do openly in the face of the universe. Permit me to add that it is a real service that I shall render to my King and country. But to consent to betray private persons, or to reveal secrets which may have been confided to me, would be to dis-

honour me for ever." Bolingbroke, in the course of this interview, showed not only a thorough alienation from the Pretender, but a decided animosity against France. At the close of this conversation, he shook Lord Stair warmly by the hand, and emphatically observed: "My Lord, if the ministers do me the justice of believing that my professions are sincere, the more they manage my reputation the more they do for the King's service. If, on the contrary, they suspect me of not acting straightforwardly, they may reasonably require from me conditions which, as an honest man, I can at the same time as reasonably refuse. The difficulties which I make against promising too much may serve as guarantees that I shall keep what I engage to do. At all events, time and my uniform conduct will convince all the world of the uprightness of my intentions; and it is better to wait for this result, however long, than to arrive hastily at one's goal, by leaving the highway of honour and honesty."*

Bolingbroke was now a supplicant for mercy from those whom he had hitherto always regarded as his most inveterate enemies. Lord Stair warmly seconded his application, and answered for the sincerity of his repentance. After Stanhope's orders, and Lord Stair's reply, the King expressly assured Lord Winchilsea of Bolingbroke's future favour. As soon, however, as the business was broached in the Cabinet, it appears to have met with opposition from Walpole and Townshend. The dissensions in the ministry, which soon afterwards resulted in their retirement from the government, and the open breach in the

* A despatch in French, containing a minute account of this interview between Bolingbroke and Lord Stair, will be found at the end of the letter to Sir W. Windham. There is also a manuscript copy of it in the British Museum.

Whig ranks, were now beginning. The Septennial Bill, and George I.'s visit to his German dominions, caused much altercation; and the confusion prevailing in the government made many of the leading Whigs shun responsibility. To attempt the immediate reversal of Bolingbroke's attainder, and to allow him to return home a free man, were steps which few of them were prepared to take. His name was execrated by their party; and even the Tories, who were influenced by the calumnies which were circulated by the Jacobites, ceased to regard him with favour. Being no longer formidable as an enemy to the government, it was thought that he could afford to wait the convenience of the ministers, who were lukewarmly in favour of his restoration. Lord Stair's despatch, therefore, remained without an answer, the royal promise was neglected, and Bolingbroke was kept in suspense.

At the beginning of the summer, however, though he still himself received no mark of returning favour, his father, Sir Henry St. John, was created Baron of Battersea and Viscount St. John. Bolingbroke was, of course, called after the act of attainder, "the late Lord Bolingbroke;" and the joke which his father had made when he was raised to the peerage, of, "Well, Harry, I thought thee would be hanged, but now I see thee wilt be beheaded," was very nearly being fulfilled. Old Sir Harry, joking and sauntering as usual from coffee-house to coffee-house in the neighbourhood of St. James's, had managed, even when his son was attainted and outlawed, to keep on good terms with the ruling powers. What were Whig and Tory to him? Of the two parties he had a languid, idle, hereditary preference for the Whigs; and he was never for one moment suspected of sharing in any of the dangerous designs attri-

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buted to his ambitious and brilliant son. He went quietly with the stream, thinking the great game of politics, and life itself, only a very good joke. Though he had once been under sentence of death for murder, he was in no danger of losing his head for high treason. He had his reward. It seemed a good stroke of policy to make him a peer, while his son was still in exile, and suffering under the Act of Attainder.

Lady Bolingbroke, too, had been for some months in London seeking to obtain, from the generosity of the government, the estate which had belonged to her, and which had, of course, with the rest of her husband's property, been forfeited by the Act of Attainder. She was far from well, and a residence in town during the sultry summer months was highly injurious to her delicate constitution. Still, however, she persevered amid all the difficulties with which she was surrounded, from the obloquy with which Bolingbroke's name was covered, the coldness and neglect of relations who were not eager to assist her in her misfortunes, her own bad health, and the hostility of her husband's political enemies. The King had indeed received her with kindness; and the first offers of a pardon to Bolingbroke himself, as he afterwards asserted, and as the despatch of Stanhope already quoted seems to confirm, proceeded directly from George the First's own unsolicited good nature. At first, Lady Bolingbroke hoped to succeed speedily in her application. But the same delay which attended Bolingbroke's own efforts to obtain the reversal of his forfeiture, also hindered the success of his wife. Months passed on, and she suffered all the anxiety of delay. With true feminine devotion, whatever causes she may have had to complain of Bolingbroke in his prosperity, she

defended him gallantly in this the season of his adversity. When the Jacobites were loud in their accusations against her husband she wrote to Swift: "As to my temper: if it is possible, I am more insipid and dull than ever, except in some places, and there I am a little fury, especially if they dare mention my dear lord without respect, which sometimes happens."* This is the wife who has been represented as indifferent to her husband's pursuits, and as living separated from him for many years after their marriage. Some months later, as she was still indefatigably prosecuting her claims to the indulgence of the ministry, and seeking to get back her fortune, she declared: "I hope, one time or other, his Majesty will find my Lord has been misrepresented; and by that means he may be restored to his country with honour, or else, however harsh it may sound out of my mouth, I had rather wear black." These expressions have also been strangely construed to mean that Lady Bolingbroke was so attached to the House of Hanover, she would rather see her husband dead than find him really acting with the Jacobites.† They mean, and could mean nothing of the kind. At the time when she penned this strong declaration to Swift, on the 4th of August, 1716, there was no question that her husband had been Secretary of State to the Pretender. It was an admitted fact, known to everybody. But rumours were in circulation during the summer that Bolingbroke was about to make his peace with the English government, by revealing all that he knew of the Pretender's secrets; and it was to these reports, exaggerated by Jacobite malignity, and the partisanship hatred of the Whigs, that

* Lady Bolingbroke to Swift, May 5, 1716.

† Cooke, ii. 39.

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Lady Bolingbroke alluded. She meant, that rather than not see her husband restored to his country with honour, she would not wish to see him restored at all. No such heartless or unwomanly sentiment surely; but a declaration worthy of one of the best of wives, made, as it was, to one of her husband's intimate friends.*

The Duchess of Ormond and Lady Bolingbroke were in very much the same position. At this time they were both soliciting from the government as a favour, what they could not claim as a right, some portion of the estates which their husbands had forfeited. Suffering the same misfortunes, they naturally condoled together, and called each other sister. The Duchess was, however, in a worse situation than her friend. Her goods had been taken away; she was left without money; she was obliged to maintain herself by borrowing from her rich relations; she expected to be deprived of her wardrobe, and could only call her own the clothes which she wore on her back. As the calumnies spread against Bolingbroke by the Jacobites in France were talked about in England, the friendship between Lady Bolingbroke and the Duchess of Ormond declined, as the friendship of their lords had previously done. They saw each other but seldom; and the Duchess sneered at Lady Bolingbroke's solicitations, insinuating pretty plainly that Bolingbroke himself was making his own terms, by betraying the Jacobite cause. "To tell you the truth," the Duchess wrote to Swift, "I believe her husband has been a better courtier than either she or any of her sex could be; because men have it in their power to serve, and I believe he has effectually done what lay in him."†

* Lady Bolingbroke to Swift, Aug. 4, 1716.

† The Duchess of Ormond to Swift, September 14, 1716.

Though the insinuation that Bolingbroke was making his peace with the English government by betraying the Stuarts, must be dismissed as utterly unworthy of credit, he was just as the Duchess penned this letter doing all that he justifiably could to get his attainder reversed. It was the month of September. George I. was at Hanover, Stanhope was in attendance upon his Majesty, and Lord Townshend, at home, had the principal direction of affairs under the Prince of Wales. Bolingbroke felt it necessary to give the government some proof of the sincerity of his repentance. He wrote a private letter to his friend, Sir William Windham, warning him, in the most confidential and affectionate terms, against being misled by the reports of the Jacobite agents. "Depend upon what I say to you, my very dearest friend," the exiled statesman observed, "nothing can be so desperate as the circumstances of affairs, nothing so miserable as the characters, nothing so weak as the measures; and whoever represents things in another light is guilty either of gross ignorance or of scandalous artifice. That ardent and sincere affection which I bear you, and which I shall carry to the grave along with me, exacts this admonition from me; and the rather because the knowledge I have of some part of what is doing, and the guess I make at the particulars which I do not certainly know, incline me to think that I should not neglect a moment in so material an affair." Bolingbroke earnestly advised his friend to keep himself free from any further engagements with the Jacobites, informed him that the King of Sweden's position was desperate, and that the Regent of France would undoubtedly throw himself into the interests of George I. This letter Bolingbroke kept by him for some days, then added, that it was sent sealed,

with a head under another friend's cover. But the fact was, that Bolingbroke transmitted his epistle, unsealed, to young Craggs, the son of the Postmaster-General, to be forwarded by him to his father, leaving him at his discretion to let it be sent on to Sir William, or be destroyed. Old Craggs, as Bolingbroke doubtless expected, at once took the letter to Lord Townshend, the Secretary of State, who read it with much interest, took a copy of it, to be shown to the King at Hanover, and ordered the original letter to be by all means forwarded to the influential Tory baronet to whom it was addressed, hoping that it might immediately cure him of all Jacobite predilections. It certainly was calculated to do good service to George I.'s government. Townshend earnestly commented upon it to Stanhope, and considered the view taken in it of foreign and domestic affairs confirmed by other knowledge in the possession of the ministers. The letter did not, however, appear to produce the effect intended. Though his wife was allowed to enjoy some portion of her inheritance, months passed on, and Bolingbroke himself was still an attainted exile.*

He endeavoured to put the best face he could upon his unhappy situation. Poverty and sickness were not yet added to the other misfortunes of his life. The supply of money which he had brought with him to France was not exhausted; and he had prudently secured a small fund which he said was enough for him to live upon with economy in any part of the world. His health, too, was much better than it had been when he was immersed in business and pleasure;

* Bolingbroke to Sir W. Windham, Sept. ½, 1716: and Lord Townshend to Secretary Stanhope, Sept. 15, 1716, O.S. Walpole Correspondence, ii. 308 and ii. 310.

and he began to write in a tone of cheerfulness respecting himself which was not merely assumed. "At present," he wrote to Swift, "I enjoy, as far as I consider myself, great complacency of mind; but this inward satisfaction is embittered, when I remember the condition of my friends. They are got into a dark hole, where they grope about after blind guides; jostle against one another, and dash their heads against the wall; and all this to no purpose. For assure yourself that there is no returning to light; no going out but by going back. My style is mystic, but it is your trade to deal in mysteries, and therefore I add neither comment nor excuse." What did these words really imply? Walter Scott has given us his interpretation. According to him, Bolingbroke was busily engaged in the intrigues of St. Germains, and his meaning might be expressed in Shakespeare's words:—

> "Unthread the rude eye of rebellion,
> And welcome home again deserted faith,
> Seek out King *James*, and fall before his feet."*

But assuredly Bolingbroke was not then engaged in the intrigue of St. Germains: he had done with the Stuarts for ever: and his meaning must have been just the contrary to what Scott has drawn. The advice Bolingbroke was then giving Sir William Windham and other friends shows plainly that the meaning of the mystical words, "There is no returning to light but by going back," implied that the Tories could only save themselves by returning to their allegiance to the House of Hanover. In a letter from Archbishop King to Swift, just a month later, there is in the same correspondence, another repetition of the rumours to which the Duchess of Ormond had previously al-

* Note to Scott's edition of Swift, xvi. 261.

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luded. "We have a strong report," the Archbishop dryly remarked to the Dean, whom he seemed to delight in snubbing, "that my Lord Bolingbroke will return here and be pardoned; certainly it must not be for nothing. I hope he can tell no ill story of you."*

But though, at the beginning of the winter of 1716, it was generally reported that Bolingbroke was to return home a free man, nothing more was actually done in his favour. He resumed the studies which had been interrupted ever since he accepted the seals of the Secretary of State under Harley; and to comfort himself under his afflictions, he began to pass through his mind all the instances preserved in Greek and Roman history of illustrious men who had been obliged to fly from the country of their birth. The result was the Reflections on Exile, of which the date, 1716, is still affixed to both the published and unpublished copy, though much of it was undoubtedly written two or three years later. It was begun, he said to Swift, in jest, and finished in earnest. This little work is avowedly written in imitation of Seneca, and especially of the Epistle from Corsica to his mother. Throughout his Reflections, Bolingbroke has, in many places, closely paraphrased Seneca's language; and we are frequently left in doubt whether the sentiments are really the English statesman's own, or merely a clever adaptation, as a kind of rhetorical exercise, of the Roman philosopher's rhapsodies. This, indeed, is the great defect of the thing. A genuine record of Bolingbroke's own reflections in exile would always have been interesting and valuable; but this work presents us with no feature of the real man, and can scarcely be considered more than a collection of pompous philo-

* Archbishop King to Swift, Nov. 22, 1716.

sophical commonplaces, destitute of any direct application to his own particular situation. The eloquence of some passages is undeniable; but it is an eloquence which we could well spare. We miss altogether the manly style of Bolingbroke's letters and despatches, and find, in its stead, the epigrammatic, meretricious splendour of a clever schoolboy's theme. Seneca is scarcely the philosopher which an accomplished English statesman might have been expected to set up as his model. At the best he was only a very bad second-hand imitator of Socrates, without the noble Attic purity, without the noble Attic wisdom, without the noble Attic heroism, which seem to illumine, with a more than earthly radiance, the pages in which Plato has chronicled the life and teachings of his sage. How different does the death of Seneca appear, even as it is depicted by Tacitus, to the death of Socrates as depicted by Plato! How like and yet how unlike! The one seems a noble reality, almost divine in the sublimity of its moral; the other a mere painted philosophical phantasmagoria. Seneca was, after all, only half a man, the panegyrist of the worst tyrants, the theatrical imitator of the noblest of sages. In his speculations we see plainly that philosophy was at its last gasp, just as in the stern sententious prose of Tacitus we catch the last sighs of Roman freedom. Rome was hopelessly sinking; genius itself even in its greatest efforts only made more painfully evident the fatal symptoms of that sad decay.

Much of this, however, seemed hidden from Bolingbroke. He knew well, indeed, the defects of Seneca's character, but considered his book on exile worthy of being eloquently paraphrased. These sentiments the English statesman made his own without any regard to

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the propriety of their application. In truth, we can make little of all those high-sounding phrases which certainly never could console any one under a similar infliction. It may be very fine to be told that Varro, the most learned of the Romans, thought it sufficient to remove all objections to a change of place, that nature is the same wherever we go; that it was enough for Brutus to reflect that those who went into exile could not be prevented from carrying their virtue along with them; or that when Anaxagoras was asked where his country was situated he pointed with his finger to the heavens. But how are we edified by such illustrations, or how do they apply to Bolingbroke? In truth, we learn nothing from them at all; nor do they in any way affect his own particular situation. That there may have been much insincere ranting about the love of our country, is no reason for the insincere ranting about an indifference to our country in which Bolingbroke indulges, and which, there can be no question, is infinitely more pernicious than the prejudice he attempts to destroy.

He admits that the notion of an affection to the land in which we are born may have contributed to the grandeur and security of states; and yet this notion he, a statesman, sets himself to explode. He boldly calls in question the very existence of such a sentiment as patriotism. He denies that there really can be any devoted attachment to any particular country independent of the mere worldly benefits derived from it; ignores the existence of any great historical associations, or the influences of tradition; and puts this love for our native land, which has been justly said to "include all the charities of all," on the basis of the lowest utilitarianism.

It would be idle to attempt to refute his reasoning on the subject. It is at once refuted by the heart of every Englishman. No people, no nation, ever existed or could exist without patriotism. Facts are always stronger than theories. We know that even Bolingbroke himself, so far from feeling that indifference to his country professed in these Reflections, suffered as keenly as any one under the stern sentence of banishment. We know that no exile ever felt more painfully the dragging weight of the lengthening chain. We know that at the very time when he was thus eloquently declaring that it was enough for a wise man to look at the planets as they were revolving in their orbits round the same central sun, or to survey the numerous army of fixed stars shining resplendently in the skies, he was moving heaven and earth in order to bring about a restoration to his country and his honours. No man was ever less inclined voluntarily to spend his time in this sublimely celestial stargazing. He was a philosopher only because he could not help it.

His philosophy was somewhat cruelly put to the test. The reports about his having made his peace at home, by revealing the secrets of the Jacobites, after being first whispered about in the higher circles of society, became still more prevalent as time passed on. The Pretender had been compelled, as Bolingbroke had foreseen, to leave Lorraine: he had for a time resided at Avignon, but he soon had to go still further south. It suited the unfortunate young man to impute most of his misfortunes to the statesman whom he had suspected of betraying him, and had chosen to dismiss with ignominy. A Letter from Avignon was published, evidently written with his sanc-

tion, reasserting all the charges of treachery and incapacity which had so suddenly died away in the previous year. This letter was not remarkable as a literary composition. Like most of the Jacobite productions, it showed that the adherents of the banished Stuarts had lost their command of the English language, after they had repudiated all allegiance to the English government. It was as Bolingbroke, who was an exquisite judge of style himself pronounced it, a medley of false facts, false arguments, and false eloquence. Still, however, it produced an effect. Taken with the other scandals which had been so industriously published against Bolingbroke, none seemed inclined to deny the truth of what was so deliberately and so solemnly asserted. The stanch Jacobites in England gave him up altogether. The Tories, who were only Jacobites when it suited the purposes of their party, spoke of their former champion somewhat doubtfully, and with many misgivings. It was impossible to deny that he was in correspondence with the English government, and seeking to get his attainder reversed. Few persons had any idea of the most unjustifiable treatment he had received from the Pretender, which had certainly warranted him in offering to resume his allegiance to George I. Ignorant as they were of facts, and eager to listen to every idle calumny of the Pretender's adherents, who hated the man they had injured, the country gentlemen who had formerly sat behind him in the House of Commons, cheering his ardent eloquence, and applauding his violent counsels, seemed at last to look with much suspicion on their exiled chief, whose character was at the mercy of all men.

Bolingbroke was fairly overwhelmed by this new and unexpected storm of obloquy. Hitherto he had

borne up cheerfully; he was relieving his mind by his transcendental Reflections on Exile when he found himself a mere mortal after all. His philosophy was at once thrown to the winds. Notwithstanding all his eloquent declamations, notwithstanding all the examples of Greek and Roman heroes, notwithstanding all the epigrammatic rants he had borrowed from Seneca, notwithstanding that his own manuscript still unfinished was open reproachfully before him, he could not act up to his professed indifference to the world, and especially to the opinion of his countrymen. He determined at once to begin the elaborate justification he had meditated ever since his dismissal from the Pretender's service. The work was not only to be a triumphant vindication of himself, but also, in the same measure, an overwhelming exposure of the Jacobites. Thus two objects would be served at once. His own revenge would be accomplished against the Pretender, the Earl of Mar, the Duke of Ormond, and the Irish papists to whom he had been so obnoxious; and in the same degree George I. and the English government would be conciliated by the clear exposition of the follies of the Stuarts, and all who on the Continent still adhered to the cause of the Chevalier.

Bolingbroke set to work, in the April of 1717, to write his celebrated letter to Sir William Windham. This young man was of an old family, and had a great estate. Since Bolingbroke had been raised to the peerage, Sir William had become a kind of Tory leader in the House of Commons. Though his abilities were not great he was an effective speaker, and he was blessed with those two very valuable qualifications in a leading politician, goodnature and excellent

temper. It is not necessary that the leader of the Tory country gentleman should be a man of brilliant intellectual endowments; but it is necessary that he should share their convictions, and sympathise with their cause. This Windham did; and precisely because he did so, though he might not be a statesman, he became a power in the state. During the late Tory ministry he had filled many offices, from the mastership of the Buckhounds to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, and until he was designated by Bolingbroke to be Secretary of State in the new ministry, which the death of Queen Anne destroyed, even before it had been born. To Bolingbroke, Windham, amid the dissensions of the Tory party, remained steadily attached, and had no inconsiderable share in his confidence. Being son-in-law of the proud and stupid Duke of Somerset, Windham turned this relationship to account, by at last inducing the Duchess to throw her influence with the Queen into the scale against Oxford. After Bolingbroke's flight, and the proscription of the Tories, Windham became a Jacobite, and, indeed, Bolingbroke expressly says, that it was only after he had received the commands of the Tories, transmitted to him by Sir William, that he embraced the Pretender's cause. In the autumn of 1715, when an insurrection in the western counties was organized for the purpose of co-operating with the intended risings in Scotland and the north of England, orders were given to arrest Windham, with other Jacobites. He fled from the messenger who came down to his house to execute the Secretary of State's warrant; but afterwards surrendered himself, and was committed to the Tower. This was, however, all the hardship he underwent, though the orders for the arrest gave great offence to

the Duke of Somerset. For a country gentleman, Windham was somewhat superstitious. He had been told that he would meet his fate by a white horse. He once while hunting received a severe kick from such an animal; and, on entering the Tower, the white horse in the arms of the House of Hanover over the gateway struck him with terror. He was soon permitted to return to his place on the front bench of the Opposition. Bolingbroke had a real affection for Windham: he called him his "dear Willie;" he corresponded with him about dogs, horses, and field-sports; his letters were always written in a strain of unusual tenderness; with Windham he never quarrelled.

The letter to Sir William Windham has frequently been pronounced the best of Bolingbroke's compositions. It is certainly the most interesting. It does not, like the Reflections on Exile, consist of vague, high-sounding, philosophical generalities, which never, in fact, regulated the conduct of any human being. Neither does it, like so many of his subsequent writings, consist of ingenious distortions of past history, all directed to one particular end, the aspersion of a living minister. A greater contrast, indeed, than exists between the Reflections on Exile and this letter it is almost impossible to imagine. Bolingbroke, the statesman, is himself: he is not the clever schoolboy, writing finely about the philosophers and heroes of Greece and Rome. We hear nothing more about Metellus, Rutilius, Attilius Regulus, Phocion, Anacharsis, Demetrius Phalereus, Thucydides in Thrace, and Xenophon on his little farm at Scillus. Bolingbroke writes of actual facts, and of the real world, of what he had himself witnessed, of his own struggles, vexations, and anxieties; of the characters of persons

with whom he was thrown in contact; and of the injustice with which he was treated. It is a most valuable chapter of authentic history: the actors live and move before us. Admitting the truth of the author's statements, it is not easy to dissent from his conclusions.

This letter has one great merit. The revelations it contains are made with great frankness, and tell frequently as much against Bolingbroke himself as against his enemies. His recapitulation, at the outset, of the designs of the Tories when they acquired power during the four years of the Queen's reign, and the weakness and vacillation of their party with respect to the great question of the succession, certainly afford no very satisfactory proofs either of the capacity, integrity, or wisdom of their leaders; while he at the same time acknowledges that he contemplated measures in the highest degree impolitic and injurious to the commercial interests of the country. His statement about his embracing the cause of the Pretender, on account of the injustice of the Bill of Attainder, cannot, as I have already shown, be received as authentic, since the Bill of Attainder had not been even brought in when Bolingbroke first accepted the seals at Commercy; and it is to be suspected that his representation of being, at this important crisis, the mere unreflecting instrument of the vengeance of the Tories, and acting, as he says he did in joining the Pretender, by their express orders, must also be received with considerable qualification. Accepting, however, his version of his conduct at that time as true, it does not increase our estimate of his judgment and discretion. The more highly he colours the folly, bigotry, and perversity of the Pretender and his agents, the picture reflects all the more strongly against himself; for it shows to what counsels,

and to what agents, he was ready, through caprice and passion, to give up the destinies of his country. The utter absence of all that is most dignified and exalting in statesmanship and patriotism, through the candid avowals Bolingbroke makes, cannot but surprise even the most indulgent of his readers. On the other hand, however hateful the Pretender and his friends are made to appear, and however much Bolingbroke's enemies might justifiably suspect the truth of his narrative, there is little doubt but that, in the main features, it is strictly correct. Indeed, his statements, so far as they have been examined, have been found in every respect confirmed by Berwick's Memoirs, and the evidence of both the published and unpublished Stuart Papers. Bolingbroke was treated so badly by the Stuarts that it was impossible for him to exaggerate the baseness, ingratitude, and absurdity of their conduct in driving him from their service. He had but to relate the facts as he knew them to be, and he saw that the effect they would produce must be most damaging to the Jacobites. Such, undoubtedly, is the impression left on the mind of all who have perused the narrative. The exposure is complete.

This object, however, was not attained in Bolingbroke's lifetime. It was, indeed, strongly asserted by a former biographer that this letter to Sir William Windham was actually published in the year 1717; but the very first sentence of the answer which it called forth, when it was really given to the world in 1753, is in itself decisive of the question as to its never having been previously published.* Neither was it privately printed at this time, nor extensively circulated among

* See the Remarks on Lord Bolingbroke's Celebrated Letter to Sir W. Windham, 1753.

Bolingbroke's friends. The evidence is all the other way. The letter was undoubtedly written when it professed to have been; but it is doubtful whether it was ever sent even to Sir William Windham at all; and it certainly was never printed until after Bolingbroke's death. Had it been so, one printed copy at least would have surely been preserved.* So important and interesting a contribution to the secret history of the time could scarcely have escaped without some notice or remark. We look, however, for any such indication in vain. The private letter which Bolingbroke wrote to Sir William Windham in the previous year excited much attention; but this great public letter passed without any observation until it was posthumously published. Then it was printed from the original manuscript, which had evidently undergone a great deal of correction, some portions being written in Bolingbroke's handwriting, though not all the work. I may also add, from a personal examination, that both the letter to Sir William, and other posthumous publications of Bolingbroke, have been very incorrectly printed; and that whenever a new edition of his works may be required, it will be highly desirable to have a copy of the existing printed volumes carefully collated with the manuscripts in the British Museum.

Why then, it may be asked, was the letter to Sir William Windham not published immediately after it was written? Such was clearly Bolingbroke's intention when he composed it; yet years passed on; the persons on whose conduct it commented one after another passed away; and the letter became deprived of that contemporaneous authority which it would have

* "The letter I writ to Windham I found; and I send it."—Bolingbroke to Lord Hardwicke, Oct. 30, 1740.

possessed had it been given to the world when the Earl of Oxford, the Earl of Mar, the Duke of Ormond, and most of the Jacobite agents were living. Though it has escaped observation, the reason why the letter was not published in 1717 is very evident when we remember one of the main purposes for which it was composed. Bolingbroke expected that he would receive his pardon, and be allowed to return home a free man. He appears to have thought himself not bound to publish what was likely to do service to the Government, until some real indications of a friendly intention to himself were manifested by the English ministers. These, however, notwithstanding the overtures Lord Stair had been authorized to make, still remained latent. The disruption which had occurred in the ministerial ranks seems to have frustrated all Bolingbroke's hopes of a free pardon. Walpole at this very time thought fit publicly to allude, in terms of the most unqualified condemnation, to the rumour which prevailed on the subject. Stanhope and Sunderland, whatever might be their inclinations, were not willing, for the sake of Bolingbroke, to incur obloquy and suspicion from some of the most influential of the Whigs in opposition, as well as from the great body of their own supporters. As, therefore, Bolingbroke continued unpardoned, his letter to Sir William Windham continued unpublished, until the time for publishing with any effect on the immediate politics of the day had gone for ever. When he was at last allowed to return to England, some years afterwards, the aspect of affairs had entirely altered. The Hanoverian succession might be considered securely established; and under the conditional and utterly unsatisfactory terms on which he was at last permitted to enjoy some of the

privileges of an Englishman, Bolingbroke considered himself released from all obligation to the Government. He was soon in direct opposition. Associated as he became with discontented Whigs and his old Tory associates, he was not disposed to revive the controversies and dissensions of which this letter was the imperishable record. It remained among his papers unpublished, and for some years passed out of his memory altogether.*

After finishing this letter to Sir William Windham in the summer of 1717, Bolingbroke continued then under the stern ban of exile. He suffered bitter mortifications. He learnt that the trial of his old rival Oxford, who had wisely braved the storm, was abandoned. Oxford might be considered honourably acquitted, while Bolingbroke still suffered the penalties of his act of attainder. He seemed almost forgotten by the political world of England, and when his name was mentioned it was in a very doubtful manner. The report that he had actually become an informer did not long continue, when it was found that he was still an exile. But after a friendly treaty had been made with the Regent, it was said Bolingbroke was to be permitted to reside in France on the condition that he absented himself from Paris. Then it was rumoured that when the act of grace which the King had promised should appear, Bolingbroke would be included; "which," said Swift, "if it be true, is a mystery to me."† It probably seemed to Swift more equivocal because the House of Commons, after Oxford's acquittal, had directly interfered by an address to the throne requesting his Majesty not to allow the Earl's name to be inserted in this act of royal clemency.

* See the letter to Lord Hardwicke, Oct. 30, 1730.

† See Lewis to Swift, Jan. 12, 1716-17; Swift to Cope, July 9, 1717; and Parl. Hist. vii. 497.

But Bolingbroke's name was not inserted in the act of grace. He could do nothing but make the best of a very bad situation. He retired, as he was obliged to do, from Paris, and taking up his residence in the country, abandoned himself once more to the study of letters and philosophy. Politics were altogether laid aside: the letter to Sir William Windham was neglected. Bolingbroke reading, moralizing, and reflecting, was what he depicted himself in his Reflections in Exile. He indulged in vague, lofty generalities and sublime philosophical meditations on the vanity of human ambition, and the nothingness of the world. When he first became Secretary of State he had taken proudly for a motto,

Nec quærere, nec spernere, honorem ;

and having nothing else to do, he now determined to carry this out in reality, though he had somewhat forgotten this maxim, when he was in such a rage with Oxford for the refusal of an earldom. In this elevated mood, as he was travelling one day in his post-chaise, he set himself to paraphrase into English verse the lines in the first epistle of the first book of Horace, beginning Vides, quæ maxima credis. They may be quoted as specimens of Bolingbroke's poetry and philosophy, though, it can scarcely be added, of his practice :

Survey mankind, observe what risks they run,
What fancied ills, through real danger, shun ;
Those fancied ills, so dreadful to the great,
A lost election, or impaired estate.
Observe the merchant who, intent on gain,
Affronts the terrors of the Indian main ;
Though storms arise and broken rocks appear,
He flies from poverty—knows no other fear.
Vain men! who might arrive, with toil far less,
By smoother paths, at greater happiness ;

For 'tis superior bliss not to desire
That trifling good which fondly you admire,
Possess precarious, and too dear acquire.
What hackney gladiator can you find
By whom the Olympic crown would be declined?
Who, rather than that glorious palm to seize,
With safety combat, and prevail with ease,
Would choose on some inglorious stage to tread,
And, fighting, stroll from wake to wake for bread?

These verses Bolingbroke afterwards enclosed to Swift, with a long letter. The exiled statesman's life passed on for two years with but little excitement. Swift wrote to him two very friendly epistles: and to these Bolingbroke replied. He indulged in many sneers at his enemies; compared the situation of the Stuarts, as Swift had previously done, to that of the dethroned monarch Pierochole in Rabelais; said that Oxford was a man by nature fitted only to be a spy, or, at least, a captain of miners; and declared that Ormond reminded him of nothing so much as the poor gentleman in Congreve's play of Love for Love, whose heart was where his head should be, and who had no head at all. This pardonable sally at his foes Bolingbroke, however, intermingled with the most sublime, unworldly reflections, in the spirit of his Horatian paraphrase. "Sincerity, constancy, tenderness," he remarked, "are rarely to be found. They are so much out of use, that the man of mode imagines them to be out of nature. We meet with few friends: the great part of those who pass for such are, properly speaking, nothing more than acquaintances; and no wonder, since Tully's maxim is certainly true, that friendship can subsist *non nisi inter bonos.* At that age of life when there is balm in the blood, and that confidence in the mind which the innocence of our own heart inspires, and the experience of other men destroys, I was

apt to confound my acquaintance and my friends together. I never doubted but that I had a numerous cohort of the latter. I expected, if ever I fell into misfortune, to have as many and as remarkable instances of friendship to produce, as the Scythian, in one of Lucian's Dialogues, draws from his nation. Into these misfortunes I have fallen. Thus far my propitious stars have not disappointed my expectations."*

Some of his old enemies saw him with kindly feelings. General Stanhope came over to Paris, as the quadruple alliance between England, Austria, Holland, and France was being negotiated. He met Bolingbroke in a very friendly spirit, and discussed with him the policy of this measure, which Bolingbroke ever afterwards condemned. The intention was, Stanhope declared, to reduce the Emperor to a specific demand, and to remedy the mistakes in the treaty of 1716. Bolingbroke replied, with much animation, that this was to justify one fault by another; and that the Emperor might have been satisfied in another manner. It was only necessary to say to Spain: "We must, in pursuance of our treaties, arm against you, as you have broken the treaties; we will no longer be bound to the strange article of the reversibility of Sicily, but will give it to the Emperor, and satisfy otherwise the Duke of Savoy." To Bolingbroke's ardent observations the stolid Whig Stanhope contented himself with answering—"Ah! Harry, you was always an enemy to the House of Austria." At the time when Bolingbroke, many years afterwards, related this conversation to his young friend, the third Earl of Marchmont, he said that he could not

* Bolingbroke to Swift, March 17, 1718-19.

† Diary of Hugh, Earl of Marchmont, Aug. 9, 1744.

tell how the article on the reversibility of Sicily slipped into the treaty of Utrecht; and imputed it to the Earl of Oxford, who was always carrying on some underhand negotiation.*

In his exile and isolation Bolingbroke had at this time found other consolations than from philosophical reflections on the nothingness of worldly honours or friendly conferences with his political foes. At the beginning of 1717 he had formed the acquaintanceship of the Marquise de Villette. She was a daughter of a noble family in Champagne, was by marriage the niece of Madame de Maintenon,† had been educated at St. Cyr, and soon after leaving the convent became the wife of the Marquis de Villette-Valois, to whom she was introduced as the betrothed bride of his own son. When Bolingbroke first knew her, she had been ten years a widow, was nearly two years older than himself, and her beauty, which had been great when she became the second wife of the old Marquis de Villette, was faded. She enjoyed several pensions, was possessed of considerable property and troubled with some lawsuits. In Paris she occupied a house in the Rue Saint Dominique, Faubourg Saint Germain. Bolingbroke was soon known to be the confidential

* Marchmont Papers, ii. 14.

† As the exact relationship of the Marquis de Villette to Madame de Maintenon has been disputed, I give the following extract from the very pleasing Souvenirs de Madame de Caylus: "Théodore Agrippa d'Aubigné, doit je parle, épousa Suzanne de Lezay, de la maison de Lusignan. Il eut de ce mariage un fils et deux filles; l'aînée épousa M. de Caumont Dadele, et l'autre M. de Villette, mon grand-père. Le fils fut malheureux, et mérita ses malheurs par sa conduite. Il épousa, étant prisonnier dans le château Trompette de Bourdeaux, Jeanne de Cardillac, fille de Pierre de Cardillac, lieutenant de M. le duc d'Epernon, et gouverneur sous ses ordres de cette place. La femme ne l'abandonna jamais dans ses malheurs, et accoucha dans la conciergerie de Niort de Françoise d'Aubigné, depuis Madame Scarron, et ensuite Madame de Maintenon."

friend of the marchioness. He resided regularly with her at her family mansion of Marcilly, and superintended all her improvements in building and planting. She was a clever, amiable, and accomplished woman. Her only fault was talking a little too much. She had owed but little to her connection with Madame de Maintenon, and was said by Voltaire to have even reproached the wife of Louis XIV. with the little that she had done for her family.*

Though Bolingbroke was now on such intimate terms with the Marquise de Villette, he still led a life of gallantry and pleasure. It has been positively affirmed by a French biographer, who ought to have known something, at least, of this period of his life, that his licentiousness was just as indiscriminate as it had ever previously been, and that he suffered severely in health from this dissipation.† He also continued his correspondence in a very gallant strain with Madame de Ferriole. She sent him, from the Marquis de Huxelles, the welcome present of pipes and tobacco. In thanking Madame de Ferriole for her attentions, Bolingbroke in return embraced, on paper, the Beautiful Circassian.

With this Beautiful Circassian there hangs a tale which, as illustrative of the French society in which Bolingbroke then lived, and in which a Madame de Tencin, a Cardinal du Bois, and a Philip of Orleans were possible, is worth telling. M. de Ferriole, the brother-in-law of the lady with whom Bolingbroke corresponded, had been the French ambassador at Constantinople. There he had purchased a handsome Circassian child, whom he brought back with him to France, and determined to educate. She grew up to woman-

* See the Lettres de Lord Vicomte Bolingbroke, Paris, 1838 (note), iii. 37.

† Grimoard's Essai Historique sur Bolingbroke.

hood even more beautiful than she had been as a child, and was admired by all who sought the society of the Ferrioles for her rare beauty. She caught the attention of the Duke of Orleans. Of course, Philip immediately threw down his handkerchief to the fair Circassian. The young lady, however, declined to pick it up; and Madame de Ferriole, who seems to have been a true Tencin, was not ashamed to undertake the office of advising her to yield to the duke's importunities. The persecuted girl sought M. de Ferriole, who protected her from the duke, only that she might be more indulgent to himself. This old libertine was successful. "When I purchased you at Constantinople," he afterwards wrote to her, "I resolved to make you my daughter or my mistress. You have been both." This Beautiful Circassian was called Mademoiselle Aïssé. She will shortly reappear in Bolingbroke's history.*

Bolingbroke spent his time at Marcilly very agreeably. He, as usual, read, hunted, and built. Books were sent to him and the marchioness from Paris by a passage-boat, which was sometimes detained by the ice. He corresponded with Madame de Ferriole and a young Abbé Alari, his letters sometimes being written at a table next to that of visitors, who were playing at cards, and others, as he was pulling down an old tower, when he was surrounded by workmen, whom he superintended from four o'clock in the morning until seven in the evening. As these improvements were being proceeded with, the Marquise de Villette went for some days to lodge at a neighbour's, and Bolingbroke declined a visit from Lord Peterborough, because he was in the midst of dust and noise. He now and then went to Paris, dining frequently at the Hôtel de Matignon.

* See Lettres de Lord Vicomte Bolingbroke (note), ii. 445.

In the November of 1718, two years after the establishment of his intimacy with the Marquise de Villette, his first wife died. Bolingbroke was not at all grieved at her death, though he was highly indignant at the terms of her will. He had allowed some portion of his property to be secretly at her disposal; he considered that it was out of pure kindness to him that King George had allowed her to enjoy a portion of the confiscated estates; and yet he had been entirely overlooked in the will. Perhaps the knowledge of the terms he was on with the Marquise de Villette had some influence on the first Lady Bolingbroke's conduct. Bolingbroke, however, was much annoyed. The poor lady had died in a very pious mood. Bolingbroke commented on this devotion with great asperity to Madame de Ferriole. "What a supple thing," he exclaimed, "is religion! How it lends itself to everything, and how it sanctifies everything, when it is managed by a skilful director!"*

The first Lady Bolingbroke was buried in the parish church, where there still exists a memorial of her, with others of members of her family, and the families of the Packers and Hartleys, with whom the Winchcombes were allied. The manor of Bucklesbury, which, having once belonged to Reading Abbey, was granted to the son and heir of the famous Jack of Newbury, passed away from Bolingbroke to the representatives of his deceased wife's younger sister, and coheiress. Bolingbroke's regret, however, at the prospect of losing Bucklersbury was considerably moderated

* "Elle est morte dévote. Que la religion est une chose souple, qu'elle se prête à tout, qu'elle sanctifie tout, quand elle est maniée par un habile directeur!"—Bolingbroke à Madame Ferriole, Décembre 6, 1718. See also his letters to the same lady, November 23, 1718, and December 21, 1728. Lettres de Lord Vicomte Bolingbroke, ii., 474, 476, and 478.

by the thought, that being now a widower he could aspire to the hand of the Marquise de Villette, with whom he was deeply in love, and whose temper was much more suited to his own impetuous disposition.

Their courtship was a strange one; and their marriage beset with difficulties. Some of her property was invested in England: on her union with the attainted and outlawed Bolingbroke this money would be liable to be forfeited with his own possessions. Besides, the marchioness had several suitors. One of them, a Scotch Jacobite of the name of Macdonald, had the honour of implanting in Bolingbroke's bosom the fiercest stings of jealousy. The statesman's temper could bear rivalry in love as little as in politics; and when angry he could put no more restraint upon his feelings in the one pursuit than in the other. One day at dinner he was annoyed at some preference which he supposed the marchioness to have shown for Macdonald, and the undisguised triumph which he thought was displayed on Macdonald's countenance, and in Macdonald's manner. Bolingbroke rushed forward to chastise his Scotch rival on the spot, tripped himself up, and tumbled down, dragging with him an avalanche of plates and dishes. The Marquis de Matignon, and the learned Abbé Alari, who had known the Marquise de Villette from childhood, and was afterwards a tutor to Louis XV.'s children, were the witnesses of this singular scene, and endeavoured to make peace.*

Bolingbroke, however, could at last afford to laugh at his rival. He was soon the lady's accepted lover. Even so early as the December of 1718, a month after his first wife's death, some rumours of his second

* Grimoard's Essai Historique sur Bolingbroke.

marriage were prevalent in England. Arbuthnot wrote to Swift: "I do not believe the story of Lord Bolingbroke's marriage, for I have been consulted about the lady; and by some defects in her constitution, I should not think her appetite lay much towards matrimony."*

The fact of the marriage for some time after the ceremony was performed was designedly allowed to remain in obscurity. This was by no means favourable to the second Lady Bolingbroke's reputation; and, indeed, the marriage was always considered problematical by some of their friends: but she was a French woman, and her lord's circumstances rendered the public announcement of their union highly imprudent. This actually took place in the May of 1720, at Aix la Chapelle, whither the marchioness had retired for the benefit of the waters.† For years they lived in the same house together as Lord Bolingbroke and the Marquise de Villette, and as such were spoken of by Voltaire, whose tragedy of Œdipus had been shown to Bolingbroke by Madame de Ferriole, and had received his warmest approbation. When they were actually married the lady renounced the Catholic for the Protestant faith of the Church of England: the conversion has been represented as made for politic reasons: Bolingbroke, in addition to all his other heresies in the eyes of his countrymen, not daring to add that of marrying a Roman Catholic wife.

France was deep in the Mississippi scheme. Bolingbroke, like Walpole with the kindred South Sea bubble in England, managed to turn his money, to gain moderately, and to secure himself from all

* Arbuthnot to Swift, Dec. 11, 1718.

† Lettres de Lord Vicomte Bolingbroke, iii. 14.

risks. He often declared that, could he have prevailed upon himself to flatter Law's vanity for half an hour a week, and to have employed his thoughts on this speculation for two minutes a day, he might have made a colossal fortune. He did enough, however, to excite Swift's wonder.

Bolingbroke out of his gains had purchased as a life proprietor from a widow a small estate, on which, until he could return to England, he determined to make his home. It was situated near Orleans, and was called La Source, from the small river Loiret rising suddenly there, and, after a winding course, losing itself in the Loire. The house, which was small, he entirely rebuilt. He tried to sound the depth of the Great Source; but three hundred fathoms of rope with a cannon ball attached to the end of it did not reach the bottom.*

He boasted that this spring was the clearest and the biggest in Europe, and that before it left his park it formed a more beautiful river than any which flowed in Greek or Latin verse. This was his hermitage; and he delighted to call himself the hermit of La Source, as he playfully called his wife Madame La Source. The beauty of his grounds, and the quiet of his retreat, appealed to his better nature; and he spoke and wrote with enthusiasm of his beloved La Source. Just as when he retired to Bucklersbury, after his dismissal from the Secretaryship of War, so he was now all for philosophical inscriptions on the pleasures of the country, and the vanities of human ambition. Over his green-house he had written, "Hic ver assiduum, atque alienis mensibus æstas;" and in an alley leading to his own room, "Fallentis semita vitæ." For a

* See Recherches Historiques sur la Ville d'Orléans, par D. Lottin, père, ii. 266.

marble memorial, which he intended erecting near his spring, he prepared two long inscriptions worthy of the noblest Greek or Roman patriots. It is not necessary to subject them to any severe scrutiny. They were in a similar strain to the Reflections on Exile, to which he was occasionally adding a sentence or a paragraph, until he had almost persuaded himself that he believed in the truth of what he wrote. The best comment, however, both on the treatise and on the Latin lines, is contained in the letter in which Bolingbroke enclosed these inscriptions to Swift: "You see I amuse myself *de la bagatelle* as much as you; but here lies the difference, your bagatelle leads to something better, as fiddlers flourish carelessly before they play a fine air; but mine begins, proceeds, and ends in bagatelle."

It would have been as well had all Bolingbroke's occupation at La Source really begun, proceeded, and ended in bagatelle. This, however, scarcely suited the character of his mind. He plunged into much more serious studies, the results of which were not always satisfactory. It is at this period that he was first inspired with the ambition of being regarded as a great philosopher, not merely in his contempt for all worldly greatness, but also as one who could tear the veil from all mysteries, solve all problems, and settle the bounds of all human knowledge. The honour of having first induced him to enter fully into a consideration of those questions in which so many years of his compulsory leisure were afterwards employed, was ascribed by himself, in the first of his productions on those weighty matters, to an ingenious Frenchman, M. de Pouilly, with whom he had many long discussions in the retreat at La Source, and whom he was afterwards represented as declaring with Pope and himself, one of the only three persons he had ever

known fit to reign. The beginning of the letters he wrote originally in French to this friend, was characteristic: "You led me first, in my retreat, to abstract philosophical reasonings; and though it be late to begin them at forty years of age, yet I have learned enough, under so good a guide, not to be afraid of engaging in them whenever the cause of God and of natural religion is concerned."

Thus he began these studies with the best intentions. He believed himself to be, in this philosophical arena, the champion of Providence and of natural religion, just as on the humbler political stage he had been the champion of the Tory party and of the Church of England. He was all for controversy. He lived in the whirlwind and the storm; and, since he could not longer combat the Whigs, began to wage war with both atheists and divines, believing of the two kinds of teachers the divines were the more pernicious. He ransacked ancient history, examined in an eclectic spirit the philosophical theories of the universe, and patiently entered into the different chronological systems which learned men had laboriously formed, in order that he might set the chronology of the Bible against the chronology of the ancient pagan nations. This last was his favourite occupation at La Source. He pursued it with the greatest ardour. He was in no respect restrained by the consciousness of the very different manner in which his life had hitherto been spent, or by the complete absence of reverence shown in every line he ever wrote. He read, he analyzed, he disputed, he commented, he dogmatized; all the time believing and asserting that he was the meritorious advocate of Providence. "No man," said he, "has higher notions of the Divine omnipotence, nor carries

them further than I." It was because he had such elevated notions of the Deity that he refused to have them degraded by what he regarded as the impious blasphemies of divines. His political mission might be at an end; but he felt that he had now another, and far nobler calling: it was to assert the majesty and beauty of natural religion. He was to be a great reformer; he was to be the eloquent asserter of the highest truths.

A young Mr. Brook Taylor, who was on bad terms with his father; a philosophical Abbé Conti, who was meditating a poem in praise of Sir Isaac Newton's system; and a thorough-going atheist, whom Bolingbroke mentions under the name of Damon, were the principal companions in his studies at La Source. From the dispute with the atheist the letters to M. de Pouilly originated; and the abstract which was afterwards published in English has most of the characteristic excellencies and defects of all Bolingbroke's philosophical writings. Though he is apparently defending deism from the attacks of atheism, his real enemy is the divine, and it is the divine that Bolingbroke delights to assail. His disbelief in the chronology of the New Testament, and his contempt for the author of the book of Genesis, and, indeed, for most of the books of Moses, are plainly avowed. It is not his scepticism which shocks the reader, so much as the manner in which it is declared. He makes no allowances for the effects of religion on other minds; and in a letter on one of Tillotson's sermons, written also nearly at this period, he calls the gentle and tolerant archbishop an orthodox bully. In a similar spirit, throughout the abstract of his letters to M. de Pouilly, he denies that the Jews had any noble ideas of omnipotence; asserting, on the contrary,

that no nation had such mean ones. When it suits him, however, to maintain his own theory, that the world had a beginning, his assumptions are quite as arbitrary as any he had condemned in philosophers or divines. He had himself no knowledge of natural philosophy, and yet he decides dogmatically on points on which only a natural philosopher can give an opinion. In opposition to everything that is now known by the name of science, he scarcely draws any distinction between the beginning of the world and the beginning of the race of men who inhabit it; and argues that all history and all tradition agree in bringing out the same general conclusion. Many of his illustrations are very ingenious; his learning, at least his reading, appears most extensive; and it is scarcely possible not to admire the copiousness of his style, and the richness of his rhetoric, when we cannot but condemn the spirit in which many of his observations are made.

Bolingbroke at last became tired of his chronological researches. "I never intended," he wrote to Mr. Brook Taylor, "to do more than to examine as well as I was able the foundations on which those systems of chronology and ancient history, which obtain in our western world, are built, *afin de savoir à quoi m'en tenir.* I have done this; and I have no more desire to pursue this study any further than to be a proficient in judicial astrology." *

It was, in truth, better to be building summer-houses, admiring Cardinal Polignac's poem, the Anti-Lucretius, writing to Madame de Ferriole about a new French cook who spoiled all his soups and prepared dishes, or inquiring about the secret of making Chinese fireworks, as Bolingbroke was doing, than in hoping that for himself

* See the Letters to Mr. Brook Taylor of Nov. 23, 1721, and Dec. 26, 1723.

alone it had been reserved to solve the mysteries of the universe, and that the philosophers and divines of all ages in their immortal aspirations had been hopelessly in the wrong. This was, however, not his opinion. He gave up his chronological investigations; but he still retained all of what might be called his spiritual pride: pride in his own intellect, and perhaps a somewhat inordinate contempt for the intellects of other men.

Visitors in great numbers, and more or less distinguished, came to La Source. All were delighted with Bolingbroke's courtesy, and by the grace of his lady, whom he called his fellow-hermit. But the most illustrious of his visitors was young M. François Arouet, afterwards Voltaire, who, just at the close of the year 1721, came to Bolingbroke's retreat, and began an acquaintance, which was not without results both to France and to Europe. Voltaire, eager, anxious, ambitious, burning for literary fame, revising and correcting assiduously his Henriade, saw in the famous Englishman everything to admire. Bolingbroke, with his mind full of chronological and speculative theories, with his hatred of divines, and his scorn of philosophers, could not but appeal to all the latent sceptical sympathies of the brilliant and ingenious Frenchman. No wonder that Voltaire spoke enthusiastically of his first visit to La Source. "It is necessary that I should make you share," he wrote to his friend and correspondent Thiriot, "my delight at a journey I have made to La Source, the abode of Lord Bolingbroke and Madame de Villette. I have found in this eminent Englishman all the learning of his country, and all the politeness of ours. I have never heard our language spoken with more energy and justice. This man, who has been all his life immersed in

pleasure and in business, has, however, found time for learning everything, and retaining everything. He is as well acquainted with the history of the ancient Egyptians as with that of England. He knows Virgil as well as Milton. He loves the poetry of England, France, and Italy; but he loves them differently, because he discerns perfectly the difference of their genius." Voltaire's admiration of Bolingbroke was certainly not diminished by the enthusiasm with which both he and his wife read the epic poem, submitted by Voltaire to their perusal, as he was in the habit of showing it to all his friends. Never was a production more read, criticised, and revised, than this ambitious, though after all somewhat tame and commonplace French epic on the virtues and heroism of Henry IV. "After the portrait I have given you of Lord Bolingbroke," continued Voltaire to Thiriot, "it will perhaps be wrong in me to tell you that both Madame de Villette and he have been infinitely pleased with my poem. In the enthusiasm of their approbation they have placed it above all the poetical works which have appeared in France."*

At the time of this visit from Voltaire, Bolingbroke had just returned from Paris, whither he had been reluctantly obliged to go for ten days about a lawsuit, and on the same disagreeable business he had six weeks afterwards again to take another journey to the French capital. It concerned, as he told Swift on the New Year's Day of 1722, four-fifths of four hundred thousand livres which he had invested in Paris, and was the miserable remnant of his private fortune.†

He felt fits of depression. Years had rolled on; minis-

* Voltaire à M. Thiriot, 2 Janvier, 1722. N. S.

† Bolingbroke to Swift, Jan. 1, 1721-22. N. S.

ters had risen and fallen; great changes had occurred in England and on the Continent; and yet, notwithstanding the promises that had been made to him, he still continued an attainted exile. Philosophy was a fine thing; but it was not everything. Despite his Reflections on Exile, despite the beauties of La Source, despite of his woods, spring, statues, inscriptions, and studies, Bolingbroke experienced the miseries of banishment; and as months and years passed away without any attempt being made to repeal the harsh sentence which had been pronounced in his absence against him, he suffered all the sickness of hope deferred. When he was in Paris again on his law business during the spring of 1722, he met Lord Polwarth, afterwards the second Earl of Marchmont, with whose son Bolingbroke, in his later years, was to be on such intimate terms. Lord Polwarth was in credit with the ministers at home; had been already on some important foreign missions; and was then proceeding as the first English ambassador to the futile Congress of Cambray. Bolingbroke took the opportunity of opening his mind to this sympathising friend. He declared himself very uneasy at the delay to which he was subjected; thought himself neglected and forgotten; assured Lord Polwarth that he had slighted most advantageous offers from Spain and other countries; that he could bring himself to act up to any resolution, and to live, if necessary, even in the most remote mountain of Switzerland; but that this constant uncertainty was very hard to bear.* Lord Polwarth told him from Lord Carteret, who had become Secretary of State on the death of James Craggs, that on the first suitable occasion the pardon should be

* Lord Polwarth to Lord Carteret, March 15, 1722: Marchmont Papers, note, ii. 185.

granted. Bolingbroke expressed himself satisfied with this assurance; but he was resolved to omit no opportunity of bringing the painful uncertainty to an end.

He wrote letters. He importuned ministers. He applied to the Duke of Orleans and Cardinal Du Bois, who exerted their influence in his favour. The bold, ambitious, learned, and aspiring Carteret really looked favourably on his cause; but he had his own difficulties to master. Walpole was now First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, having succeeded Lord Sunderland, whom the South Sea business had driven from office. Walpole was closely allied with his brother-in-law, Lord Townshend, who had been again appointed the other Secretary of State, Lord Stanhope having soon followed Craggs to the grave. Death was at this period busy among statesmen, poets, and warriors. Sunderland, after his retirement, survived but a few months Craggs and Stanhope. Marlborough, too, was no more. Walpole and Townshend were struggling against Carteret for ascendancy in the Government. The brilliant Carteret, though he knew all modern languages, and could talk in German with George I., was playing but a losing game. The King could not, amid all these shifting scenes of intrigue and political vicissitude, have forgotten the promise he had made to Bolingbroke; and George I., though his character was much misunderstood in England, and notwithstanding his weakness for unprepossessing women and strong punch, was in his way really a conscientious, just, and honourable sovereign. To him really, more than to any of his ministers, we are justified in ascribing Bolingbroke's tardy restoration in blood, or pardon, which passed the great seal in May, 1723. The Act of Attainder

remained, and his estates were still under forfeiture: if his father died he could not be his heir; but he could now, at least, come to England, plead his pardon, and see what more might be done. He passed through Paris, taking leave of his French friends, some of whom saw his departure with regret, expecting, as perhaps he did himself, that he would not again return. One of these was Voltaire. "The recall," he wrote, "of Lord Bolingbroke to England interests me much. He will be to-day at Paris, and I shall have the grief of bidding him farewell, perhaps for ever."* Voltaire did not foresee how soon he would himself proceed to England, and what important consequences would follow from this visit, and the intimacy with Bolingbroke, which had been begun at La Source, and was to be continued at Dawley.

As Bolingbroke landed at Dover, Atterbury was waiting for a wind to go into banishment. They were, however, since Bolingbroke's breach with the Stuarts, no longer friends. Atterbury has been represented as exclaiming, "I am exchanged!"† The bishop left England on the 18th of June. The return of Bolingbroke and the exile of Atterbury coincided in time, and there was no getting out of the prelate's mind the notion that there had been an intentional exchange. The exclamation was doubtless made, though the fact of the direct meeting at Dover has been doubted. It is certain that, since Bolingbroke's dismissal from the Pretender's service, there had been no friendship between the statesman and the bishop. Atterbury was much more a politician than a divine, and he had recently been on bad terms

* Voltaire à Mdme. la Présidente de Bernières, Avril, 1723.

† See the Atterbury Correspondence, edit. 1780, ii. 117, 274; and the volume of Stuart Papers edited by Mr. Glover.

with both Bolingbroke and Prior, who had lately sunk under chronic disease, and been buried at the feet of Spenser in Westminster Abbey.

When Bolingbroke reached England the London season was over. The King had gone to Hanover, and the two Secretaries of State, Carteret and Townshend, were both in attendance upon him, jealously watching each other, and seeking to trip each other up. The fashionable world, after having gone nearly mad about operas and opera-singers, was scattered in the country. Some of Bolingbroke's former friends, however, met him with open arms, particularly Sir William Windham and Lord Harcourt. His manners, which had always been fascinating, were declared to be improved; he looked as well as ever; and years of study, and perhaps suffering, had increased the dignity of his fine presence. While exciting the admiration of his old friends, he managed to make some new ones, who promised him to do their utmost to get his attainder reversed. Among these were Lord Finch, the son of his old enemy, Lord Nottingham, and the Earl of Berkeley, then at the head of the Admiralty. The great body of the Whig party looked, however, with great displeasure on Bolingbroke's pardon, and still more at the prospect of the reversal of his attainder. This is clearly confessed in the private correspondence between Walpole and Townshend, and even in the letters of Bolingbroke himself. He wrote to the King, and his rapacious mistress, the Duchess of Kendal, thanking them for what they had done, and these epistles he enclosed in one to Lord Townshend. "I shall do my best," he wrote, "on this side of the water, to lessen the force of any objections against what the King has done; and if my restitution can be completed, your lordship may have more useful friends and

servants; a more faithful one you cannot have, than I shall endeavour to approve myself."*

To Walpole, Bolingbroke was equally warm in his expressions of gratitude. He professed himself entirely devoted to the cause of the two brothers, as Walpole and Townshend were called, and even revealed to them the machinations of their rival and enemy Carteret with the Tories. He proposed an alliance between Walpole and those Tories who, like Sir William Windham, Lord Bathurst, and Lord Gower, had been in opposition to the Government ever since the accession of the House of Hanover. He said that they were tired of their present situation, ready to renounce Jacobitism, and willing to come to the support of the Government. It was natural that Bolingbroke should propose such an union, as in this way he could endeavour to be on good terms with the Whig statesmen, on whom alone he could depend for his restoration, and also remain attached to his old friends. Bolingbroke's conduct at this time has been stigmatized by the biographer of Walpole as abject and servile; but surely these epithets are much too severe. It was necessary for him to make the best of a bad situation; and we know enough of his temper to feel sure that to be at all dependent for mercy on Walpole and Townshend, must have cost him many a bitter pang. The scheme, however, which he offered for Walpole's adoption, had only a little while before been broached by Lord Kinnoul, and had been promptly rejected by the minister as likely to bring suspicion on the orthodox Whiggism of his section of the Government. "I think the manner in which you received Lord Kinnoul's overtures was exactly right," Townshend had replied to

* Bolingbroke to Lord Townshend, June 28, 1723.

Walpole's communication on this subject. "Nothing can be more dangerous than to enter into negotiations with the Tories, or even to labour under the suspicion of it at this time."* Walpole was not likely to think better of this plan when it was revived by Bolingbroke; for his pardon had already given more offence to their followers than Walpole and Townshend had expected. "I am sorry," wrote Townshend at the time, "to find Lord Bolingbroke's affair continues to make ill blood among our friends."† Walpole therefore rejected Bolingbroke's proposal as promptly as he had that of Lord Kinnoul; and he accompanied his peremptory refusal with some advice to the unfortunate statesman. "I answered," Walpole wrote to Townshend, "that it was both impossible and unadvisable for me to enter into any such negotiations, and told Lord Bolingbroke I thought he was doing a most imprudent thing, who was to expect his salvation from a Whig parliament, to be negotiating to bring in a set of Tories; that if this should be known, his case would be desperate in Parliament; and desired and advised him to give this answer to his friends, as from his own farther recollection; and that he thought it not proper, on consideration, to mention it to me, which he seemed to acquiesce in, and be satisfied."‡

But Bolingbroke was far from satisfied; as, indeed, how could he be? The Whigs were not prepossessed in his favour: they grumbled loudly at what had already been done for him, and were not willing to see anything more accomplished. Though, in his pride of youth and power, he had once insisted on Marlborough

* Coxe, i., 202.
† Townshend to Walpole, July 28, 1723.
‡ Walpole to Townshend, July 23, 1723.

giving up his old friends, the advice was very harsh and unacceptable; and Bolingbroke found it not easy to follow when it was given to himself in still more unhappy circumstances. It was not to be expected that he was to look coldly on Sir William Windham and the young race of Tories whom he might yet hope to lead. He was suffering from fever, and, under the treatment of Dr. Mead, was taking bark. He determined to withdraw himself again from England, not so much then, as it has been supposed, on account of his want of a fortune to maintain an appearance there,* but really that he might not offend either party, and in the hope that he might have the opportunity on the Continent of pleading his cause to the King in person. Already his intention to visit Hanover had been mentioned and spoken of by Lord Townshend.† By going, however, to Aix-la-Chapelle ostensibly to drink the waters for the benefit of his health, he would not be very far from Herrenhausen, and might perhaps receive an invitation to his Majesty's little German court.

Before leaving England, however, he wished to see Lord Harcourt, who, though a Tory, was on friendly terms with Walpole, and was doing all he could to bring about his friend's complete restoration. Harcourt was at his country seat. Bolingbroke wrote to his old ally in the following words:

"London, July 26, 1723.

"MY LORD,

"I think it a case of conscience to interrupt your lordship in the enjoyment of the pleasure of the country, which you love so well, and can follow so little. But a return of my fever, which Dr. Mead hopes he

* Cooke.

† Townshend to Walpole, Coxe, ii. 260.

has stopped by the bark, makes me in haste to be going for Aix, where he thinks I may promise myself to find a radical cure for this ill habit of body. There are some other reasons which are fortified to my apprehension since your lordship left us, that incline me to go away about Thursday or Friday sevennight, which time is later than your lordship set for your return. If by any accident your return should be deferred, I must beg leave to wait on you in the country, or desire you to give me a meeting where it may be least inconvenient to your lordship on the road, for I cannot think of leaving England without embracing the person to whom I owe the obligation of having seen it once more. I will not descend into any particulars at present, but I cannot help saying that I see some clouds rise which it is certainly much more easy to hinder them from gathering than to dispel when gathered. I am, and shall be, in all circumstances of life, and in all countries of the world,

My Lord,

"Your most faithful and obedient servant,

"BOLINGBROKE.*

"To Lord Harcourt."

Bolingbroke set out for Aix-la-Chapelle in September. He travelled from Mons to Namur, but found the roads very bad, and suffered much inconvenience before he reached Aix-la-Chapelle. Thence he despatched a younger brother to Hanover, with complimentary letters to the two rival Secretaries of State,

* This letter, and another which I shall afterwards quote, were found among the Nuneham Papers by G. S. Harcourt, Esq., M.P., and given by him to the present Lord Stanhope. See Lord Mahon's History of England, second edition, Appendix to the second volume.

Townshend and Carteret, and with another also to the Duchess of Kendal, "from whom," he said, "I have received the greatest civilities possible." It may be observed that the brother he then sent to Hanover was not the George St. John whom he had previously sought to introduce into public life, and had made secretary to the plenipotentaries at Utrecht. Poor George had died very prematurely some years before at Vienna; the expectations Bolingbroke had indulged in respecting him, had not been fulfilled; and he now had other two younger brothers demanding his protection, his father having had three sons by his second marriage. Old Lord St. John, as Bolingbroke's father was now called, continued still gay and sprightly, and appeared to have better health than his eminent son. Bolingbroke, though only forty-five, began to feel the effects of his early dissipation. Already he was beginning occasionally to complain of some of the infirmities of age. His attacks of ague were very significant, and these frequently subsided into attacks of another disease. Scarcely had he begun to drink the waters at Aix-la-Chapelle, when his fever changed into a severe fit of the gout. This was the second time he had suffered from this painful malady; and he was for days confined to his room. Surrounded as his bed was one day by visitors of all kinds, he received a letter from Swift, which braced his nerves and cheered his spirits. He afterwards, for the edification of the Dean, drew a ludicrous picture of the scene, which his correspondent thought to be a caricature, but which Bolingbroke assured him was very little exaggerated.*

He corresponded, at the same time, with Sir William

* Bolingbroke to Swift, Dec. 25, 1723; and Sept. 12, 1724.

Windham in the same affectionate manner which marked all their intercourse. Windham was, indeed, one of the very few of Bolingbroke's friends with whom he was always on the best of terms: their intimacy began, continued, and ended with warm affection on both sides. Windham's wife, Lady Katherine, had been ill, and Bolingbroke wrote to congratulate him on her recovery. The letter also showed, as usual, their common taste for field sports. Sir William was training four hounds which Bolingbroke designed as a present for a brother sportsman, and at La Source the statesman had a spaniel which he was having broken for Windham. The dogs are pleasantly alluded to in Bolingbroke's letter; and a postscript is added by Lady Bolingbroke, half in English and half in French, claiming the dear friends of her husband as her own.* Lady Bolingbroke could both read and write English, though she spoke it with a foreign accent. She was ever fond of her husband, and the union, in every way cordial and affectionate, was a great comfort to Bolingbroke amid all the disappointments and annoyances he still had to endure.

They were very many. The removal of his attainder, notwithstanding all his applications, appeared still distant. He received no invitation to Hanover, as he had expected; and to his restless mind Aix-la-Chapelle was but a dull place. As soon as his health permitted him, he set out by way of Brussels for Paris, where there were new actors in a new scene.

From the death of Louis XIV. England and France had generally been on friendly, and even confidential terms. The Duke of Orleans and his minister, Du

* These letters are preserved amongst the Egremont Papers, and may be found quoted in a note to Bowles' edition of Pope, ix., 93.

Bois, may in their private lives have been the most profligate of mankind, yet on the whole they governed France with a wisdom worthy of better men; and, so far as England was concerned, acted with a friendly generosity worthy of nobler rulers. For some years scarcely a cloud had arisen to disturb the friendly union of the two countries; and English influence had been paramount at the court of Versailles. Much of this was due to Du Bois, who, though a shameless priest, was also something of a statesman. England, sensible of his good offices, had sedulously supported this minister; and by her aid he had obtained considerable revenues, the first place in the government, an archbishopric, and a cardinal's hat. But Du Bois, much regretted, at least by the English ministers, had died in the preceding summer; and just as Bolingbroke arrived in Paris, at the beginning of the winter, the alliance between the two countries received a still greater shock by the death of Du Bois' master, the licentious Duke of Orleans himself. Here was a field for speculation, diplomacy, and intrigue. The Duke of Bourbon became First Minister; and the British Government was full of anxiety. Would the friendly relations between the two governments be continued? In the event of the death of the young king, Louis XV., would the renunciations be carried into effect? Foreign courts were in commotion. The hopes and pretensions of the Spanish party were strongly roused. Sir Luke Schaub, a Swiss, who had been secretary to Stanhope, and was now at Paris as the agent of Carteret, found his influence counteracted by Horace Walpole, who had filled secretaryships and diplomatic appointments of one kind or another for several years, and had only lately been sent to France by his brother, as a means of

thwarting the influence of Carteret on the French government.

Into the perplexed and busy scene at Paris Bolingbroke plunged with all his usual ardour, hoping that he might render such services to the English ministry as would make the repeal of his attainder and complete restoration of his estates and honours, acts of common gratitude. He warmly espoused the cause of Walpole and Townshend against that of Carteret, spoke most contemptuously of Schaub, and undertook to exert all his influence with the Duke of Bourbon and his mistress, Madame du Prie, to promote the continuance of the alliance between the two countries. He left no means unemployed to convince Horace Walpole of his friendship. He assured him that his brother Robert had acted with good faith; that for his own part he had done with parties for ever; that he would make no engagements to any set of men except those who should aid him in his restoration, and to them he professed ever to show the most devoted attachment. He was anxious, however, to be relieved from suspense. He could endure this uncertainty no longer. Surely, in the course of the winter, and with the new session of Parliament approaching, something might be done. Horace Walpole, in his own name, and in the name of his brother, professed equal friendliness in return, but committed himself to nothing. Whatever was to be effected could only be accomplished through Parliament; and Horace Walpole took care to explain the difficulties with which Bolingbroke's restoration was likely to be met from the rank and file of the Whigs, and even from the Jacobites, who, acting on the representations they had received from abroad, still regarded him as a traitor to their cause. As Atterbury was residing at Brussels

when Bolingbroke passed through that city on his road from Aix-la-Chapelle, it was reported they had had an interview. Bolingbroke denied with warmth, and certainly with truth, that there was any foundation for this rumour. He had only returned from Aix-la-Chapelle through Brussels because the roads were better by that route for carriages; and as for Atterbury, "There is not a man living under the sun," said Bolingbroke, "whom I have less reason to trust or more to complain of than the late Bishop of Rochester."*

Bolingbroke corresponded on French politics, and his own restoration, at the close of the year 1723, and the beginning of the year 1724, with almost as much industry as during the period when he was a real Secretary of State. Once more he seemed immersed in business. He talked, he wrote, he intrigued, he protested, he implored. His private secretary, John Brinsden, passed to and fro with minutes and letters from Paris to London, and from London to Paris. Yet still no positive promise was made to him by the Walpoles that the act of attainder would during the next session be reversed in Parliament. Perhaps he did not act judiciously, in professing such absolute devotion to one section of the ministry, and especially the one to which, from old political associations, he seemed the more antagonistic. It was impossible that he could be on intimate terms with Horace Walpole at Paris, without the circumstance being remarked by Schaub, who soon informed his patron, Carteret, of Bolingbroke's conduct. Carteret, who was not a suspicious man by nature, could at first scarcely believe that, after all that had passed, Bolingbroke could profess such attachment to the Walpoles.

* See Bolingbroke to Townshend in Coxe's Walpole, ii., 327.

"What you say of Bolingbroke," replied Carteret to Schaub, "is scarcely credible. If it is true, he has not half the capacity I thought he had."*

It certainly was true. The best apology for Bolingbroke consists in his situation. He was down; he was at the mercy of his old foes; he could expect nothing but from their kindness; and he omitted nothing to establish himself in their good graces. He was only half successful. Walpole was not a man to run any unavoidable risks, or give himself any unnecessary trouble. The session of Parliament, which began on the 9th of January, and closed on the 24th of April, was one of the quietest on record. It passed over, and Bolingbroke's attainder continued unreversed.

The omission was more vexatious to him because he was just then engaged in negotiating a marriage for a lady, whom he calls his wife's daughter, with a young man of a noble family, and was anxious to be settled himself, either in England or France. Voltaire affirms correctly that Madame de Caylus was, in fact, only the stepdaughter of Lady Bolingbroke. Voltaire certainly ought to have been well informed on these matters, since he was personally acquainted with the second Marchioness of Villette after her marriage with Lord Bolingbroke, and even introduced anecdotes, on her authority, into his history of Louis XIV. Yet in the first edition of that work he called her the actual niece of Madame de Maintenon, when she was only her niece by marriage; and he afterwards acknowledged and corrected the error. He also positively stated that a daughter of the Marquis de Villette was even grown up to womanhood at the time of her father's marriage with Mademoiselle de Marcilly, and

* Hardwicke Papers: Carteret to Schaub, Mar. 12, 1724.

that both the wife and daughter were so handsome, that Madame de Maintenon said to the Marquis, "It will not depend on you whether your house be full of good company. You have both a wife and daughter who must attract it."* Voltaire nowhere, however, alleges, as Grimoard does, that the second Lady Bolingbroke had no children by her first husband. Bolingbroke himself alludes to a young lady at this time, and frequently afterwards, as "the marchioness's daughter;" and we are justified in concluding, from other evidence, that Lady Bolingbroke had one, if not another daughter by her first husband. A stepdaughter would, in 1724, have been nearly as old as Lady Bolingbroke herself, who resigned all her pensions in favour of her own daughter in order that she might have a sufficient dowry.†

Scarcely, however, had Lady Bolingbroke effected this indispensable point in a French matrimonial arrangement than she found that the income she had reserved to herself in England was seriously jeopardized. Bolingbroke received from Lord Harcourt a letter enclosed by Lord Townshend to Horace Walpole, informing him that Sir Matthew Decker, with whom the Marchioness de Villette's money had been placed, refused to pay it, on the plea that, as she was now the wife of Lord Bolingbroke, he might be made answerable for it by Parliament. This was a business scruple; but it enraged and alarmed Bolingbroke. He called Sir Matthew Decker a rascal, and even did not spare his old friend John Drummond, who had been doing bank-

* Compare Œuvres de Voltaire, xxi., 149 (the Siècle de Louis XIV., chap. 24), with Œuvres de Voltaire, xxvii., 170 (Voltaire's Mélanges Historiques), in the seventy-volume edition, 1785.

† See Bolingbroke's letter Feb. 3, 1724, in Coxe's Walpole, ii., 327. It was more probably addressed to Lord Harcourt.

ing business in London since the accession of the House of Hanover, had managed to keep on pretty good terms with the Whig ministers, even during the South Sea mania, and had been employed to invest the Marchioness de Villette's money. Against Bolingbroke's wishes, Drummond had allowed a large sum to remain with Decker; and the result was, that this man refused to pay either principal or interest. Sir Matthew did not act justifiably even as a man of business, for even Lord Townshend called the reason given for withholding the money very bad. Still there was, in the opinion of Townshend and Harcourt, only one course to take. Lord Bolingbroke was not to appear in the matter at all. His wife was to present a petition to the Duke of Bourbon, as a French subject, requesting his interposition with the King of England to obtain justice. An indemnity might then be procured; and Horace Walpole was authorized by Lord Townshend to promise the Duke of Bourbon, as soon as he should mention the business, the best assistance of the government.

Bolingbroke yielded to this advice, though it caused him some rage and mortification. The Duke of Bourbon's warm recommendation to King George was obtained. It was necessary that Lady Bolingbroke should proceed to England as the Marchioness of Villette, and personally advocate her cause. It was not pleasant to proceed on such a business in such an equivocal situation; but, as Bolingbroke said, any dissimulation was allowable to get out of the hands of robbers and assassins. She carried with her, besides several letters from her husband to the English ministers, one to his old friends Lord Harcourt and Sir William Windham, and to another person, more important than any of them, the Duchess of Kendal. The marchioness

was to act according to circumstances; to appear either as Bolingbroke's wife or otherwise, to suit the occasion; and to spare no efforts, while prosecuting her pecuniary matters, to urge his complete restoration.

Before going over, she was engaged in a very delicate business. The Beautiful Circassian was in trouble. M. de Ferriole, her old protector, had died in 1722. Since then Madlle. Aïssé had had several offers of marriage which she rejected. She had, however, fallen desperately in love with a young officer of artillery, and the consequence was that she soon expected to give birth to a child. Not daring to mention her situation to Madame de Ferriole, she earnestly besought the aid of Lord and Lady Bolingbroke. They made Madame de Ferriole believe that Mademoiselle was to accompany Lady Bolingbroke to England; but instead of doing so she retired to a quiet lodging in Paris, and was confined of a daughter. This child Bolingbroke adopted. She was called his niece, was brought up at a convent, and went under the name of Miss Black. Some of his friends who knew of the circumstances were inclined laughingly to hint that Miss Black stood towards him in a nearer relationship. But both he and Lady Bolingbroke really seem to have acted in this matter with consideration and delicacy to the Beautiful Circassian. We find him, some time afterwards, gravely thanking Madame de Ferriole, whom it was still necessary to deceive, for her kindness to the Little Breton, as the orphan child of a father and mother whom he had esteemed. This was really the child of Mdlle. Aïssé.*

Lady Bolingbroke arrived in England at the end of May. She was kindly received by the ministers; the King was gracious; and the indemnity was ob-

* See the Lettre à Mme. Ferriole, $\frac{17}{28}$ Dec. 1725.

tained. "We learn," wrote Voltaire from Paris, in July, "that Madame de Villette has gained her cause in England, and has declared her marriage."* She, however, did more. By the judicious present of eleven thousand pounds to the Duchess of Kendal, she induced this reputed left-hand wife of the King warmly to advocate Bolingbroke's restoration. The money was paid through William Chetwynd to Lady Walsingham, the niece of the duchess, who had assuredly an itching palm.†

Walpole could scarcely be ignorant how matters stood, and it was, in fact, his interest to conciliate the King's most powerful favourite. Walpole and Townshend had just triumphed over Carteret, who had been compelled to exchange his post of Secretary of State for the lord-lieutenancy of Ireland. Horace Walpole was officially appointed ambassador to the court of France. The ascendancy of the brother and brother-in-law was unquestionable; and out of mere decency they could under the circumstances scarcely refuse to do something for Bolingbroke. The Abbé Alari, who was supposed to have some influence in the French court, also soon afterwards went over to England, and earnestly importuned Walpole to reverse Bolingbroke's attainder. He and Lady Bolingbroke obtained a promise that in the following session a bill should be brought into Parliament. The Duke of Newcastle, who had succeeded Carteret as Secretary of State, was very friendly

* Voltaire à Mdlle. la Présidente de Bernières. This letter, with another, is placed in the Voltaire Correspondence under the year 1722: but the allusions to the "late Duke of Orleans," and his daughter, the Queen of Spain, show clearly that they were written in 1724. Philip, the King of Spain, had abdicated in favour of his son Louis, and, on his premature death, afterwards, to the great perplexity of some historical students, resumed the crown.

† Clough Papers; quoted by Coxe in the Walpole Correspondence, ii., 345.

to Lady Bolingbroke, and professed himself highly favourable to the reversal of the forfeiture. Bolingbroke wrote to his grace, in October, a special letter of thanks. "I shall wait," he observed, "with a perfect confidence the effect of those promises which have been made me this summer, and shall receive it with a due sense of the King's goodness, and of the friendship of his ministers."*

Bolingbroke, after remaining some time in Paris, and attending regularly a literary club called the Société d'Entresol, founded by the Abbé Alari, had returned in the summer to La Source. He had his books, and he had his dogs; and in the two occupations of hunting and studying, endeavoured to compensate himself for his wife's absence. After taking a very friendly leave of Townshend and Walpole, she joined her husband in the autumn; but by his direction returned to England again before the winter to personally see that the ministers redeemed the pledge they had given. Bolingbroke, in the winter of 1724, resumed his correspondence with Swift. He wrote a long letter of many pages. He told the dean of the intention he had formed of writing the history of England for the first twenty years of the century, and vindicated himself from the imputation of being a freethinker, which Swift, it appeared had heard, in language which Bolingbroke did not remember, when he was writing his philosophical works. He also mentioned to the dean his Reflections on Exile, and again quoted the words of Brutus, that a virtuous man could not be unhappy in exile, because wherever he went he carried his virtue along with him.†

* Bolingbroke to the Duke of Newcastle, October 24, 1724.

† See the very remarkable letter of Bolingbroke to Swift, Sept. 12, 1724.

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Bolingbroke continued at La Source through the winter of 1724, and until the spring of 1725 had returned. He corresponded regularly with Sir William Windham, who was in London, attending to his parliamentary duties, the two Houses having met before Christmas. It was, however, in the second part of the session that Bolingbroke's business was expected to be brought on; and nothwithstanding all his appeals to Brutus, he could not but look forward to the result with some anxiety. As far as his health allowed him, he continued, however, to practise field-sports as much as ever. One of his grooms whom he called Little Jack, had brought his horses again to La Source; and Bolingbroke, in January, determined to see whether he had strength enough to bear the fatigues of a wolf-chase. This was a trying pastime to men, horses, and dogs. He speculated earnestly as to which of his hounds would assail the wolf boldly; which would sneak off as soon as he stood at bay; and which would scarcely be able to hunt him at all. He was always breeding and breaking hounds. The most hardy of his pack he had recently obtained from Lord Gore: he was anxious to procure more young ones in the spring; and, intending to send over to Lord Gore's huntsman for some of his best crosses, he wished to buy several couples. He communicated these intentions to Sir William Windham, who was his regular sporting correspondent, and for whom he was at this time, as during his former residence at La Source, rearing several dogs. One of these animals, a very fine one, had been given to him by the Count de Hautefort; other two were being trained, as Bolingbroke declared, by the best schoolmaster in France; and another, a beautiful and high-bred bitch, though she was too tender

and could only hunt for about an hour at a time, was considered one of the most handsome creatures of the kind ever seen. All these were intended for Windham. Some persons have sneered at Bolingbroke for entering into minute details about his dogs and horses, and for being so fond of fox-hunting and wolf-hunting. Others however, may, perhaps, consider his indulgence in these tastes one of the most pleasing features of his biography. Bolingbroke, as he afterwards expressed in one of the most admirable passages in his political writings, was never inclined to neglect the government of men for horses and hounds.*

Unfortunately he could now enjoy these sports but seldom. Though he had scarcely arrived at more than middle age, his health continued to be very precarious. He felt, he said, the approach of decay. Fits of gout, alternating with fits of fever, warned him that his constitution was no longer robust. Just as his mind was occupied with this wolf-chase, he was seized with a violent affection of the stomach, and had several attacks of intermittent fever. His strength was worn out, and his spirits greatly depressed. Lady Bolingbroke and Sir William Windham, whom he informed about his illness, were alarmed. He wrote in February to reassure them, declaring that he had quite recovered; but that there was nothing which rendered existence any longer desirable to him, except the marchioness and one or two friends. He looked, however, impatiently for the act that was to pass in his favour; and it was some time before his hopes and his fears were set at rest.†

He had written, in his letters to Sir William Wind-

* Egremont Papers: Bolingbroke to Sir W. Windham, Jan. 30, 1725. See also the Essay on the Spirit of Patriotism.

† See letter to Sir W. Windham, Feb. 6, 1725; Coxe Correspondence, ii., 331.

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ham, of January and February, of sending over to England in the spring. This seemed to indicate that he had no intention himself of coming over before the summer. But when he found that no attempt was made, as soon as Parliament was reassembled, to release him from the disabilities under which he was placed, his natural impatience could not be restrained. He set out for England. He arrived in London at the beginning of March; and, that he might give no offence, soon went into the country, to an estate which he purchased in Middlesex. He looked anxiously for the ministers to make some sign; but March was ending, and no motion had been made in Parliament. On the contrary, Arthur Moore, who had managed, like John Drummond, to make his peace with the ruling powers, forgot the obligations he owed to his former patron, and circulated a report to the effect that the ministers could scarcely be expected to do anything for Bolingbroke while he was in intimate correspondence with Pulteney and the Opposition. This assertion, containing the very imputation he went into the country to avoid, came to Bolingbroke's ears, and caused him both annoyance and alarm. Bolingbroke wrote anxiously to Lord Harcourt: "If this report was to be thrown into the world, Arthur Moore might with a better grace have left it to be propagated by some other emissary; and if it be designed as an excuse for leaving me in my present condition, than which none more cruel can be invented, I do assure your lordship that the excuse shall not hold good. I have very much esteem for Mr. Pulteney. I have met with great civility from him, and shall on all occasions behave myself towards him like a man who is obliged to him. But, my lord, I have had no private correspondence or even

conversation with him; and whenever I appeal to the King, and beg leave to plead my cause before him, I will take care that his ministers shall not have the least pretence of objection to me in any part of my conduct."*

The truth was that the ministers had more difficulty with the members of their own party than Bolingbroke supposed. Walpole knew what the feeling on the subject was among his followers, and he was not inclined to oppose their prejudices. At last, however, by the importunities of the Duchess of Kendal, and the express command of the King, the minister was obliged to do something. On the 20th of April, Lord Finch, who had constituted himself Bolingbroke's champion, presented a petition from him to the House of Commons. The substance of Bolingbroke's prayer to the House was, after his professions of penitence, that leave might be given to bring in a Bill allowing him and the heirs of his body to take his settled estate; and to enable him to hold all the personal estate which he then possessed or might acquire, and invest it in the purchase of any real or personal estate within the kingdom. Walpole rose on the part of the ministers to state what they had determined to do with respect to the petition. He assured the House, by the command of the King, that Bolingbroke had seven years before made his submission, and had been encouraged to hope for some mark of his Majesty's grace and goodness. This statement, as

* This letter was also given to Lord Mahon from the Nuneham Papers. It has induced me to make the statement, in the text, of Bolingbroke's return to England before the bill for his relief was brought in, though it is surprising to see it dated Dawley Farm, March 22, 1725. Yet if we are to follow some of the dates given of his letters to the Abbé Alari, in the French collection, entitled Lettres de Lord Vicomte Bolingbroke, it would appear that he was in England earlier. These dates, however, it is impossible to reconcile with those of the letters to Swift and Windham; and they are also contradicted by statements in the preliminary essay as well as by the events to which they refer.

Bolingbroke afterwards pointed out, and as I have shown, was not literally accurate. The submission had been made nine years before, and the expressions Walpole employed, in construing the royal promise, contained very much less than the truth. "The King authorizes you to give all suitable hope and encouragement,"* were the words of Stanhope's despatch to Stair. This meant more, surely, than "being encouraged to hope for some mark of his Majesty's grace and goodness." Since then, too, many years had gone; and no explanation was given why the royal word, deliberately pledged, had not been sooner redeemed. Bolingbroke had at least the right to expect that, when some mark of favour was at last extended to him, the delay should be taken into consideration. This, however, was not the case. Walpole admitted that the petitioner was a fitting object of mercy, and that his prayer, so far as allowing him to enjoy his family inheritance, which, of course, he could not do without an Act of Parliament, might reasonably be granted. This the minister was prepared to recommend, but nothing more; and thus was the royal promise of "all suitable hope and encouragement" tardily performed.†

Walpole's best excuse is that this boon, small as it was, could not be granted without considerable opposition. Methuen, the Comptroller of the Household, declaimed violently against the Bill when it was first proposed by Lord Finch, declaring that having been the British minister in Portugal at the time when the Catalans were given up, he knew well the heinousness of Bolingbroke's guilt in that sad business. Many more of the usual supporters of the government were equally determined

* See ante, p. 495.

† See Bolingbroke's Answer to The Final Remarks.

in their opposition, especially Sergeant Miller, Lord William Paulett, Sir Thomas Pengelly, and Arthur Onslow. Dr. Friend and Sir Thomas Hanmer supported the motion, which was carried by 231 against 113 : under the circumstances no very extraordinary majority. Lord Finch and Walpole were, ordered to bring in the Bill. On the second reading, Lord William Paulett moved a clause disabling Bolingbroke from sitting in either House of Parliament, or holding any place of trust under the crown. This too, though strongly supported, was rejected by a majority of seventy votes. In fact, the proposal was unnecessary. As long as the other provisions of the Act of Attainder were in force, and they of course continued unrepealed, Bolingbroke's return to office, or even his entrance into the House of Lords, was very effectually barred. The Bill went through the third reading, and was sent up to the other house, where it passed, but not without a division, and a protest from the Lords Coventry, Bristol, Clinton, Lechmere, and Onslow, who took strong constitutional objections to the manner in which Bolingbroke's pardon had been granted.

Bolingbroke could now enjoy the estate he inherited from his grandfather, and was not prevented from holding any other property that he might acquire. He was, however, anything but satisfied, as, indeed, he had very little reason to be. Until the Bill had passed he prudently abstained from corresponding with Swift : as soon, however, as it became law, he allowed his discontent openly to break forth against both the ministers and the measure. "Here I am, then," he wrote to the dean, "two-thirds restored; my person safe (unless I meet hereafter with harder treatment than even that

* See Parl. Hist. viii., 461, 466, 478, 479, 481.

1725.

of Sir Walter Raleigh); and my estate, with all the other property I have acquired, or may acquire, secured to me. But the attainder is kept carefully and prudently in force, lest so corrupt a member should come again into the House of Lords, and his bad leaven should sour that sweet untainted mass."*

Here arises the question, What was the extent of Bolingbroke's obligations to Walpole? Walpole's adherents, at one time his biographer Coxe, and Horace Walpole always, loudly raised the cry of ingratitude against Bolingbroke, for afterwards assailing the minister who had thus restored him to England. Bolingbroke had certainly a right to expect a complete restoration. Years ago it had been promised; and even though Walpole had not been a member of the Government who made the promise, it does not follow, as Coxe asserted, that he was not bound by the acts of his predecessors. The promise was one really made in the name of the sovereign, and of a nature that must be held binding on every minister. Even this excuse, however, will not serve. It is not true that Walpole was out of office when Bolingbroke was told to expect all suitable hope and encouragement of public favour from the King; a reference to the date of Stanhope's despatch, March 28, 1716, will prove that at the time it was written both Townshend and Walpole were in office, and shared the responsibility with their colleagues. Besides, when it is actually stated that Walpole allowed the Bill, such as it was, to be introduced with the greatest unwillingness; that he only gave way by the express command of the King; that before moving in the business at all he extorted a promise

* Bolingbroke to Swift, July 24, 1725.

from his master that Bolingbroke should always be excluded from office, and even from the legislature, how can the charge of ingratitude be seriously maintained? Walpole knew Bolingbroke's restless and aspiring character well. He knew that whatever professions he might make, no sooner should his attainder be reversed, than he would either be admitted to a full share of power, or become a formidable opponent to any Government. Walpole believed in nothing less than expressions of friendship and gratitude. He was jealous of his own colleague and brother-in-law, Townshend, with whom he was already beginning to quarrel, and afterwards turned out of office; and in his heart he felt, and could not but feel, all the old rivalry and enmity against Bolingbroke. What he did for Bolingbroke, he did as tardily as he could; he then did as little as he could; and after Walpole's slow and reluctant concession, Bolingbroke was fully justified in not being able to sit down and dine with him, and in exclaiming "Thank you for nothing!"

CHAPTER XIV.

1725—1735.

AT DAWLEY.

Bolingbroke retired into the country. He had purchased of Lord Tankerville an estate called Dawley. It was pleasantly situated near Uxbridge, about sixteen miles from London. Dawley, Bolingbroke determined to make his home. He soon had a handsome villa, an extensive park before it, gardens which allowed him scope for every improvement, stables for his dogs and horses, land to sow with wheat or to lay out in meadow, just as it might suit the taste or whim of the passing moment. Here he resolved again to lead the life of a country gentleman; and he wrote of this fine estate as a mere farm, Dawley Farm being the address of many of his letters. He built, he planted, he laid out the grounds. He furnished the house in an elegant manner, and, in fact, launched out into such expense in improving and adorning this rural abode as surprised even those who had been familiar with his manner of living when he was Queen Anne's favourite minister. Dawley cost him in one way and another nearly twenty-three thousand pounds. Economy was never one of his habits. He despised, as Swift told him, the simple rules of arithmetic, and scarcely ever

considered that two and three only made five, and never more.*

There was much imprudence in this extravagance; and Bolingbroke himself soon afterwards regretted it. But he was still in his heart as aspiring as ever, and notwithstanding his recent disappointment about the reversal of his attainder, hoped yet to appear again on the public stage. He was far from having any suspicion that his part in the great political drama was over; that he had left office for ever; and that it would have been wiser in him to have left hope behind. He moralized, he declaimed on the vanity of all earthly things, he was eloquent on the tranquil pleasures of the country; but he could not subdue his yearnings for a more active and illustrious career. He had been early inured into habits of office; he had been the most brilliant statesman of his age in the flush of his early manhood; and he naturally pined for the great excitement of English political life. For, whatever else he might pretend to be, or persuade himself that he was, he remained essentially a politician. His philosophy was but a makeshift, and his country pursuits a relaxation. The inconsistency of his professions and conduct was noticed by persons who were most intimate with him, amid all the novelty of his first occupation of Dawley. Pope wrote to Swift: "One of our friends labours to be unambitious; but he labours in an unwilling soil."† Bolingbroke had talked of buying the sovereignty of the Bermudas, and of bidding a farewell to England and politics for ever. This was all pure affectation, or at least mere self-illusion. Never had he less intention of abandoning his native land; never was he less convinced of the

* Swift to Bolingbroke, Oct. 31, 1729.

† Pope to Swift, Sept. 3, 1726.

advantages of exile, or satisfied with the harmless pleasures of the country, than during the ten years he spent at Dawley. He was thrown from his horse while fox-hunting during his first autumn at this delightful retreat. The accident was reported in the newspapers, and somewhat alarmed Swift, who mentioned his apprehension to his correspondent Pope. "Lord Bolingbroke," replied Pope, "had not the least harm by his fall; I wish he had received no more by his other fall."*

Pope and Bolingbroke were neighbours, Dawley and Twickenham being only the distance of a pleasant ride from each other through country lanes by Cranford, Hounslow, and Whitton, down to the luxuriant valley of the Thames. Their friendship was of an old date, and had been on both sides established by favours given and received. Pope had been introduced to Bolingbroke by Swift, in the days of Queen Anne's last ministry; and in some of the busiest days of that busy time, Bolingbroke had found time to read over and correct portions of Pope's translation of the Iliad. Pope, on the other hand, even while Bolingbroke was yet in exile, and covered with obloquy by both Whigs and Jacobites, had boldly given the testimony of his esteem to the fallen statesman. No sooner was Bolingbroke settled at Dawley than the intimacy between him and the little poet of Twickenham became firmly established. Pope's reputation was great, and he was proud of seizing every occasion to declare his admiration of his friend. They visited each other almost daily, shared the same studies, wrote sometimes also with Gay, and what Bolingbroke called "Cheddar," letters to Swift on the same sheet of paper.

* Pope to Swift, Oct. 15, 1725.

Bolingbroke had the air of the great world about him; his reputation was historical; to the sickly and secluded poet the noble author of the peace of Utrecht seemed the most illustrious of mankind. Though not given much to idolatry, though full of admiration for his own poetical talents, and jealous of all competitors, yet Pope absolutely worshipped Bolingbroke, felt towards him all that Boswell ever felt for Johnson, thought him more than human, and only a little lower than the angels.* In all this Pope was most sincere. Full of affectation, and seldom inclined to show his real sentiments, still in his admiration of his neighbour at Dawley there was no affectation. The worship of Bolingbroke became one of Pope's cherished passions. This idolatry, too, was exactly suited to Bolingbroke's character. Regarding himself as born for empire and command, it was something while excluded from the legislature, and hated by more than one section of English politicians, to have secured to himself the cordial admiration and esteem of the famous poet of the age, who was ready to record his glory in the most finished verse. Bolingbroke, in their correspondence, assumed a kind of dictatorial superiority over both Pope and Swift. This dictatorship Pope was willing to allow; and Swift, with whom there might have been difficulties, was generally too far distant to question the supremacy. The intercourse between the three friends therefore seemed very pleasant. The world was made for them to criticise and comment upon; and they seemed to confer a great favour upon the world by living in it, and upon mankind, whose high privilege it was to number three such master spirits among their fellow-creatures.

* This is Pope's own expression: Letter to Swift, Oct. 15, 1725.

One of the joint letters from Pope and Bolingbroke was written in the December of 1725. Bolingbroke pointed out the defects of Seneca's character in language which had a double application. "Seneca," wrote Bolingbroke, "was a slave to the worst part of the world, to the court; and all his big words were the language of a slighted lover, who desired nothing so much as a reconciliation, and feared nothing so much as a rupture."*

In the spring of 1726 there was joy at Twickenham and Dawley. Swift visited England for the first time since his return to Ireland on the death of the Queen; and the three friends met each other again, after many vicissitudes and a long separation. He resided partly in London and partly with Pope at Twickenham, and while sauntering in the poet's garden, or lounging in the grotto, renewed all his old intimacy with Bolingbroke. The politic Dean, indeed, who, with all his eccentric misanthropy, did not neglect to cultivate, as far as possible, his own particular interests, waited on the Princess Caroline, and had two interviews with Walpole. He was not willing to adopt all the enmity which Bolingbroke had begun to entertain against the minister, nor had he yet made up his mind, as Bolingbroke was on the point of doing, to cast in his lot with Pulteney and the Opposition. Gulliver's Travels, which had not yet been published, was discussed by the friendly circle; and when, in July, Bolingbroke suddenly disappeared for a fortnight, on a visit to Lord Bathurst, he playfully addressed a letter from the banks of the Severn to Pope, Gay, and Swift, as the Three Yahoos of Twickenham. News came to Swift from Dublin that Stella was almost hopelessly ill. He meditated taking a journey to France,

* Pope and Bolingbroke to Swift, Dec. 10, 1725.

and Bolingbroke offered to go with him, and spend a winter at La Source, which at a great expense he still kept up, in order that, after some law business was settled, he might dispose of it on more advantageous terms. Swift declared himself almost as much a lover of the second Lady Bolingbroke as he had been of the first, though he confessed that her graces were entirely French. She gave much pleasant animation to the dinner and supper parties at Dawley. She complained that the air of England oppressed her imagination, and that when her friends talked English rapidly she heard only a noise; that the only words she thoroughly understood when she was greeted by her English acquaintances were the eternal "It is a very cold day," or "It is a very warm day;" and that these two expressions, with the constant use of fans by the ladies, seemed to her to constitute all the intercourse of polite society. Swift, as his habit was, found fault with the dishes at Dawley. He cared nothing, he said, for French cookery. If he ate a piece of roast beef he wished to know that it was roast beef; when he asked for a plate of fowl, he wished to recognize what was brought to him; he did not understand why people should not know what they ate. Bolingbroke himself professed to be a mere farmer, and was called by his wife Le Seigneur de Dawley, and Notre Fermier. Distressed by the reports about Mrs. Johnson's health, Swift left Twickenham without any leave-taking, proceeded to London, and from London set off for Dublin. Bolingbroke, not knowing the cause, was greatly displeased at Swift's unceremonious departure. "Il se plaint et boude," wrote Lady Bolingbroke of her husband.*

* See Lady Bolingbroke's two letters to Swift, February 1727.

In the month of September a serious accident happened to Pope as he was going home one night rather late from Dawley. He was in Bolingbroke's carriage, drawn by six horses, a number which, owing to the badness of the roads, was then frequently required, as much for use as magnificence. There had been some heavy rains at Whitton, about a mile from Twickenham. A bridge having fallen, the carriage had to be driven through the river. The night was dark, the bank was steep, and a hole on one side, and a block of timber on the other, caused the vehicle to upset. Pope was in great danger of being drowned. The water came up to the knots of his periwig; and the footman was for some time prevented from coming to his assistance by being himself stuck fast in the mud. One of Bolingbroke's servants, however, at last succeeded in breaking a glass window of the carriage, and the poet was lifted out more dead than alive, with two fingers of his right hand severely cut by the broken glass. For a time it was believed that the tendons were severed, and that he had quite lost the use of the two fingers, which hung helplessly down. Three separate letters, from Arbuthnot, Gay, and Bolingbroke himself, conveyed to Swift the news of this accident to their common friend, the little poet, who considered himself, and was also regarded by them, as so great a man.*

Bolingbroke was himself, at this season, accustomed to remain very late at his neighbour's, Lord Berkeley, who resided at Cranford, about two miles from Dawley. There the statesman was as much at home as at Pope's; and there he frequently both dined and supped with Gay,

* Gay to Swift, Sept. 16; Arbuthnot to Swift, Sept. 20; and Bolingbroke to Swift, Sept. 22, 1726.

Windham, and the society of the hospitable nobleman, who had become one of his greatest admirers, and who, probably on account of this intimacy, was by the jealous Walpole soon afterwards expelled from the ministry.

This autumn of 1726, Bolingbroke, too, received at Dawley a more illustrious visitor than either Gay, Pope, or Swift. Voltaire had arrived in England. Though flying from persecution, he brought with him the warmest letters of recommendation from Morville, the French Secretary of State, and from Horace Walpole, the British ambassador at the court of Versailles. But to Bolingbroke and his lady he needed no letters of recommendation. They received him as an old friend. He looked upon Bolingbroke's house as his own; and during the two years he remained in England, his letters were frequently addressed to Bolingbroke's care. He came to this country strongly prejudiced in its favour, as the land of liberty and free thought; and the benefits which were heaped upon him by the hands of the King downwards through all the higher ranks of society, still more deeply rooted this attachment. He was one of the few great Frenchmen who ever understood England; and he was delighted with the boldness of the speculations, and the freedom of public life which he everywhere witnessed. The writings of Bacon, Locke, and Newton seemed to afford him a glimpse of a new world. He applied to their works all the logic, clearness, and precision of the highly-cultivated French intellect. He became the interpreter between the English mind and the Continent; and what he interpreted to France Bolingbroke frequently interpreted to him. To whom, indeed, could an ingenious Frenchman come for information more properly than to the famous English

statesman, who was so well acquainted with both France and England, who could talk in French as brilliantly as Voltaire himself, and whose hospitalities Voltaire had shared at La Source? The greatest of Newton's works Bolingbroke, indeed, had not himself scientific knowledge enough to understand, much less to interpret to others. But he had studied diligently Bacon and Locke All that was acute, bold, and rational in their writings he eagerly grasped; some of their higher characteristics he was inclined to disregard. As expounded by Bolingbroke, the utilitarianism of Bacon became more utilitarian, and the materialism of Locke more material; and these leading features of their philosophy, without the redeeming qualifications which Bacon and Locke themselves sought to introduce, were eagerly seized by Voltaire's inquisitive intellect. The continued acquaintance of Bolingbroke and Voltaire was not, however, altogether friendly. Voltaire hinted to Bolingbroke the intention of dedicating the Henriade to the illustrious author of the peace of Utrecht. Bolingbroke, apparently declining the honour, wrote to Madame de Ferriole, asking her whether Voltaire really was sincere in the intention he had professed. The answer was not favourable. Bolingbroke replied that he was well aware of Voltaire's duplicity, but that he was much mistaken if he supposed he could make him his dupe by words.* Voltaire afterwards, in very complimentary terms, dedicated his tragedy of Brutus to Bolingbroke; but Brutus was not the Henriade.

The publication of Gulliver's Travels was the great topic of conversation and of merriment at Dawley and Twickenham during the latter period of 1726 and the beginning of 1727. Voltaire laughed at the

* See Lettres de Lord Vicomte Bolingbroke, iii. 274.

Lilliputians and Brobdignagians as heartily, and admired them as much, as either Pope or Bolingbroke, and he was anxious to make the acquaintance of their friend Jonathan, the eccentric Dean of St. Patrick's, who appeared a Rabelais without Rabelais' filth. He wished to have the book translated into French, and wrote earnestly to his correspondent Thiriot to undertake the task.* Lady Bolingbroke sent Swift some fans in which the principal scenes of Gulliver were delineated; and in Bolingbroke's circle the world seemed to go as merry as a marriage bell.

It was not, however, exactly so. Ambition was still burning fiercely within his breast. He again plunged deeply into politics and court intrigue. He disregarded the advice of his friend, the Abbé Alari, who returned to France, and who, on being told by Bolingbroke what he was about to do, said frankly, "I pity you." Bolingbroke was offended at the Abbé's frankness: soon afterwards their correspondence ceased. The retirement of Dawley was frequently abandoned, and Bolingbroke, besides his country retreat, had a house in Pall Mall, where much of the winter of 1726 and the spring of 1727 were spent in all the hurry and agitation of his old political pursuits.

For some years Europe had appeared on the verge of war; and there had been, on the part of England especially, diplomatizing and mediating without end. The triple alliance, the quadruple alliance, the quintuple alliance, and the Congress of Cambray, had all been directed to the purpose of settling the differences between the Emperor and Philip, between the King of Spain that was and the King of Spain that would have been. It is no part of a biographer of Bolingbroke to enter minutely into the history of these diplo-

* See Voltaire à M. Thiriot, 2 Fevrier, 1727.

matic perplexities, which, after having so long troubled many of the courts of Europe, immediately changed their aspect by the return of the Infanta on the hands of the court of Madrid, and the sudden and portentous alliance of Spain and Austria by the conclusion of the treaty of Vienna, in the April of 1725. To guard against the results of this union, of which the establishment of the Emperor's visionary Ostend Company, and the acquisition of Minorca and Gibraltar from England were supposed to be some of the terms, the treaty of Hanover was signed in the following September by France, England, and Prussia. Other powers afterwards came into this new alliance; but when the year 1727 began, war seemed more than ever imminent. The Duke of Bourbon was no longer at the head of affairs in France: Fleury had just risen to his long ascendancy in the government of the young King, Louis XV. Horace Walpole, the British ambassador at Paris, was doing his best to continue the French alliance, and his brother Robert had gradually drawn to himself nearly all power in the English administration.

With Walpole's personal ascendancy fully established also coincides the gradual organization of the opposition. Hitherto it had been of no weight nor character. Pulteney had, in the spring of 1725, objected to the payment of the burdens on the civil list, and he soon moved for a committee of inquiry into the state of the public debts. But it was at this time, and with the co-operation of Bolingbroke and the Tories, led by Sir William Windham, who lived at Dawley as at his own home, that the opponents of the government first showed a formidable and united front.

Much of this organization was due to Bolingbroke himself. He had, unquestionably, many of the talents of a party leader; and his object was to induce the

Tories and independent Whigs to sink their differences and act steadily together in opposition to the individual minister. The old Tory watchwords of the Church and the Monarchy were neglected; the corruption and degeneracy represented as pervading all departments of the administration were declaimed against as the national evils of the time; and all honest men, of every party, were exhorted to combine against a minister whose only system of government was alleged to be by means of money. There was some truth in these indignant outcries, which began to be heard loudly in 1727; but there was also much exaggeration, and not a little absurdity. It was not true that Walpole governed solely, or even principally, by the influence of money: he governed by the great Whig families who had acted steadily together in support of the Revolution and the Protestant succession: he governed on that great principle of party connection which Bolingbroke himself formerly applauded and acted upon, and now as loudly condemned. Fidelity to his party had been hitherto Bolingbroke's excuse for many errors, and some otherwise indefensible proceedings. That all parties were evils became now his loudest cry, repeated, with few variations, to the last days of his life. Hitherto he had professed to be a Tory; he now became, as he declared, something better, a patriot, whose only principle was the good of his country. Walpole was to the nation like a nightmare; and it was the duty of all good and wise men to unite and shake off this incubus. This cry suited both Whigs and Tories, and, in fact, every discontented person who thought his merits overlooked, or was driven into opposition by the minister's insatiable love of power. A new generation had grown up, and was then entering public life, which Bolingbroke undertook to teach: the young and rising men

were to sit at his feet and learn wisdom and patriotism: the second Cato amid the corruption and degeneracy of Rome could not have preached a more austere virtue. There was in these later writings of Bolingbroke, it may be observed, very little of Toryism. Nothing can be more erroneous than to represent him, since his breach with the Pretender, as a champion of the Tory party; in fact, he from that time repudiated Toryism altogether; and his doctrines, so far as they had any practical application, formed a kind of liberal and independent Whiggism.

For Pulteney, the parliamentary leader of this opposition, was a Whig of the Whigs, as, indeed, were most of the young men, of whom Bolingbroke afterwards became the teacher. Nothing would have horrified them more than to have been thought Jacobites, or even Tories; and from their connection with those who laboured under the imputation of unfriendliness to the Protestant succession, they thought it necessary to assert more loudly than the ministerialists their devotion to the pure orthodox Whig creed.

Pulteney was the son of a Leicestershire squire. He had been educated at Westminster school, and afterwards at Christ Church, Oxford; and when Queen Anne paid a visit to the ancient university with the rising statesman, Mr. St. John, then Secretary-at-War, in her train, Pulteney was chosen by the heads of his college to deliver the congratulatory oration to her Majesty. But Pulteney carried away with him no Toryism from Christ Church. He soon afterwards entered Parliament on the Whig interest, and remained throughout all that eventful period decidedly opposed to Bolingbroke and the Tories. His great patron, and the friend of his father, was an old Whig

Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Guy, a parliamentary character of those days, and who was also young St. John's adviser when he first entered office. "Don't waste your influence in important applications for your friends, secure something really good first for yourself," was the advice of this old Secretary of the Treasury to young St. John, as the accumulated result of his great experience. Henry Guy, however, gave to Pulteney something more substantial than even this valuable advice. He bequeathed to him forty thousand pounds and an estate of five hundred a year: in those days a great fortune, acquired, it may be presumed, during three reigns by following the same prudential maxims which the veteran official inculcated on younger men. At the accession of George I. Pulteney became a privy councillor and Secretary-at-war, as the immediate reward of the energy, ability, and consistency which he had displayed in his opposition to Queen Anne's last ministry. But the Duke of Marlborough, who was made commander-in-chief, was offended at the appointment of Pulteney to be Secretary-at-War, regarding that office as one which he had the right to fill up according to his own satisfaction. This is a remarkable circumstance, as it proves clearly that when St. John was himself made Secretary-at-War, with the duke's warm approbation, it must have been, as I have previously shown, at Marlborough's express nomination, and that the young statesman was indeed, as he was regarded, Marlborough's personal friend and favourite. Pulteney and Walpole having fought side by side in opposition to the Tories, remained attached to the same section of the Whig party, and Pulteney followed his friend Walpole out of office, and into opposition to the administration of Stanhope and Sunderland.

* See Bolingbroke to Swift, Jan. 1, 1722.

But when Walpole returned to office, and became virtual prime minister, no great post was offered to Pulteney. The engrossing statesman only proposed a peerage for his friend, in order that he might be removed from the great arena, of which Walpole, sooner than any other politician, had discovered the importance. Pulteney was not then inclined to repeat St. John's error. The peerage was scornfully rejected. The importance of the House of Commons was still daily rising; and there Pulteney remained, to become, though always sitting on the Treasury bench, the ablest leader of a regular parliamentary opposition it had yet known. Yet Pulteney does not rank high amongst the statesmen of the last century. He has left no mark in English history. He seems to have contended merely for personal ends. While the names of Walpole, Chatham, Burke, Pitt, and Fox are on all lips, that of Pulteney is seldom heard, and awakes no familiar or cordial recollections. More than mere debating talent, or political cleverness, is necessary to a man who would be permanently remembered among English statesmen.

With Pulteney, however, Bolingbroke was now closely allied. The celebrated periodical, The Craftsman, had just been established by Pulteney, and both in parliament and through the press a regular political war began to be waged. In parliament Bolingbroke could do nothing; but his graceful and eloquent pen was at the service of the Opposition; and in the January of the year 1727 he formally, though anonymously, appeared as a political writer in opposition to Walpole and the ministry. This was in a pamphlet, the publication of the first number of what Bolingbroke called The Occasional Writer. It was in an

ironical strain of satire and flattery, professing to be written by a Grub Street hack, and addressed to the powerful minister, into whose service, like a hireling Swiss, he offers to enter. There were many taunts, but not a great deal of politics in this first letter. Walpole was upbraided with the prosecution of hucksters and printers carried on by one of his principal instruments, though it never appeared that he had, like Bolingbroke, fourteen printers at the bar of the House of Commons at once. Even the French alliance was sneered at; and Horace Walpole, the minister at the court of Versailles, spoken of with contempt as the tool of the French government. In the second pamphlet of the Occasional Writer, a week after the first, Bolingbroke entered more elaborately into his views on foreign affairs, pretended, as the anonymous Grub Street pamphleteer, to be a Whig, and in favour of prosecuting the war which was terminated at the peace of Utrecht; and again wrote doubtfully of the designs of France, applauded the triple alliance, and censured the partition treaties. Just as he was concluding this second letter an answer to the first was brought to him, which, in a postscript, he called a stiff and pedantic piece of composition, and declared that the author could not be Walpole whom he ostensibly personated. In the third pamphlet of the Occasional Writer, Bolingbroke changed his tactics, professed himself convinced that the reply had really been written under Walpole's direction, and gave an abstract of it, in the manner of the day, as the M—— R.'s Answer to the Occasional Writer. Bolingbroke guessed correctly that Walpole had actually much to do with the answer the first number of the Occasional Writer had called forth. The minister had doubtless expected some such thing, and immediately

recognising Bolingbroke's style, which was sufficiently unmistakable, accepted his challenge, and retorted with great spirit and asperity. The ironical offer of service the minister disdainfully rejected. Even in the abstract Bolingbroke gave of this reply, and which was not altogether fairly given, some of the retorts have an edge. "You are so profligate a character, that in your prosperity nobody envied you, and in your disgrace nobody pities you." "I know you like the Emperor, because he is like yourself in gratitude; and you hate our friend France, because you were well received there." There were more of the minister's rejoinders which Bolingbroke did not quote. "I cannot be mortified at his resentment, all whose obligations are paid in that coin; but had much rather have such a foe than such a friend." These hits were rather telling. Bolingbroke, for a statesman, was always remarkably thin-skinned; few men ever winced more sensibly under adverse criticism; and this feeling is very perceptible in the third, and the last, of the Occasional Writers. He begins and ends with taunting Walpole with his love of painting, which was scarcely a reproach; undertakes to continue to serve him and his government with decency, disinterestedness, and impartiality; and seems to lay out the ground for a more extended field of opposition. Yet no more Occasional Writers appeared. Bolingbroke had indeed afterwards some intention of writing a fourth, and wished Swift to co-operate with him;* but the warfare, at the outset, had become a little too direct and personal, and he must have felt that there was danger in continuing it in the manner it had been begun.

* Bolingbroke to Swift, May 18, 1727, and August, 1727.

He changed his tactics, and assailed Walpole's power in a more circuitous and hidden way.

He never forgot how Godolphin and Marlborough were overthrown by Lady Masham, and how he had overthrown Oxford by the same means. Could not the influence he had acquired over the Duchess of Kendal by the present of the eleven thousand pounds be turned to a similar account? As soon as the bill allowing him to enjoy his estate had passed, he wrote to the King claiming the full redemption of the royal promise; and both he and the Duchess of Kendal agreed in blaming Walpole because the act of attainder was not repealed. Lady Bolingbroke was assiduous in her attentions to the tall, lean, old mistress. The duchess was, in her way, as jealous of Walpole as Bolingbroke himself; and he artfully increased her distrust of the minister on whom the King called at Richmond in an afternoon, and drank punch very freely and in a very friendly manner. She made common cause with Bolingbroke, and determined to co-operate with him to effect Walpole's removal. She privately delivered a memorial from Bolingbroke, full of invectives against the minister, and asking the honour of an interview in the royal closet, to show that Walpole's power would be fatal to the prosperity of the country, and to the Brunswick dynasty. This memorial George I., however, put into Walpole's hands. The minister taxed the duchess with her double dealing, and earnestly advised the King to admit Bolingbroke to an audience. The interview was granted, but, apparently, with little effect. Lord Lechmere, then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, broke in unexpectedly upon the conference; and, on seeing who was there, declaimed violently to the King against Walpole, as the author of much mischief him-

self, and for allowing to come into the royal presence one who was still more mischievous. The indignant Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster rushed out of the royal presence without offering for signature the papers he had brought with him for that purpose. Walpole waited with some anxiety to know from the King what important communications Bolingbroke had made. "Bagatelles! bagatelles!" exclaimed George I., with a laugh.

Nevertheless Bolingbroke believed that he was in a fair way to be prime minister. George I. set out for Hanover, and died on the road. There was a strange midnight scene; the King struck with apoplexy, and, at his earnest command, the postilions galloping their horses through the pleasant summer night, "To Osnabruck! to Osnabruck!" and the carriage, with smoking horses, at length driving up to the bishop's gate, and his royal brother found lifeless within. Bolingbroke, however, always asserted that had George I. not then died, Walpole would have been dismissed, and that he would himself have been made first minister.* Walpole, too, though he called Bolingbroke an habitual and incorrigible liar for making the statement, appears, in moments of depression, to have anticipated the same result. But both Walpole's fears and Bolingbroke's hopes were probably exaggerated. It was not in George I.'s power to make Bolingbroke prime minister in opposition to the formidable Whig combination which had seated and maintained the House of Hanover on the throne; and Bolingbroke certainly underrated the effect of his own unpopularity, as he was some years afterwards in a very painful manner given to understand by Pulteney

* Bolingbroke to Sir W. Windham, Nov. 9, 1735.

and his new allies, whose battles he was fighting. A fate, however, seemed to attend the efforts of Bolingbroke. The death of George I. seemed as fatal to his schemes as the death of Queen Anne had been. No sooner did he raise the chalice of power to his lips than an Almighty hand dashed it to the ground.*

For some months, however, after George II. succeeded his father, Bolingbroke still hoped that Walpole's government would be of very short duration. It was known that the minister had not always been on the best of terms with the late Prince of Wales; and Swift and Bolingbroke counted confidently on the King's mistress, Mrs. Howard, as they had recently built their hopes on the Duchess of Kendal. In the summer and autumn of 1727 Walpole's disgrace was considered certain, though his fall might be made as gentle as possible.† But Swift and Bolingbroke were once more deceived. Walpole had secured the support of Queen Caroline; and the character of this extraordinary woman now began to make itself felt in the Court and the Government. She might bear, with apparent equanimity, the presence of the King's mistress, but she would endure no rival in power; and though George II. might be an unfaithful husband, the Queen's influence over him in matters of business was found to be supreme. She was his most trusted adviser: and by her aid Walpole's administration continued unshaken.

It was only by degrees that the opposition made this disagreeable discovery. Bolingbroke was still, in his own language, ready to revive and animate the paper

* See Coxe's Walpole, i., 262, 265; and the Etough Papers, Sept. 13, 1737, quoted by Coxe, ii., 344.

† See Swift to Dr. Sheridan, June 24, 1727.

war; and Swift, who never lost sight of what he believed to be his interest, continued in England, and even set about writing a paper for the Craftsman, to aid his friends in this crisis of their struggle against their political enemy. Swift, however, was seized with a combined attack of his deafness and giddiness, and suddenly withdrew to Ireland again, once more taking no leave of Bolingbroke, who loved to be courted, and did not readily put up with the appearance of a slight. Bolingbroke himself returned to Dawley, at last getting, as he declared, hold of the earth, and striking strong and tenacious roots. He professed that his farm was everything to him; that he had done with courts; and that agriculture, literature, and philosophy should be henceforth his only occupations. The more it became clear as months passed on, and the year 1728 arrived and also began to slip away, that Walpole was not to be dismissed, Bolingbroke ploughed, read, and planted at Dawley more sedulously than ever. In the pursuits of his literary friends he continued to take the warmest interest. He rejoiced at the success of The Beggar's Opera. Both he and Lady Bolingbroke earnestly patronized and recommended The Henriade, which at last made its appearance while the author was in England, then residing at The White Peruke, in Maiden Lane, Covent Garden; and the progress of Pope's satire on Dullness, which was afterwards entitled The Dunciad, was watched by Bolingbroke with impatience and admiration.*

But in the spring of 1728 the studies and farming at Dawley were for some weeks interrupted by Lady Boling-

* See Swift to Pope, Oct. 30, 1727; Swift to Gay, Nov. 27, 1727; Voltaire to Swift, Dec. 14, 1727; and another letter of Voltaire's to Swift of the same period, but without date; and Bolingbroke and Pope to Swift, Feb. 1728.

broke's illness. Her health had never been good since her arrival in England; the climate did not agree with her; and her husband and herself in May repaired to Bath in order to drink the waters. Lady Bolingbroke was indeed seriously ill, and he was far from well. They remained at Bath for more than a month with many other fashionable and distinguished persons. Gay was there, full of the success of The Beggar's Opera; and there, too, was Congreve, one of the great representatives of the wits and poets of a past generation, in the last stage of weakness and decay, but kindly attended by Henrietta Duchess of Marlborough.

In June Bolingbroke and his wife were again at Dawley. His health was much improved, but his lady had received no benefit from the Bath waters. Neglecting the advice of her doctors, as soon as she returned to Dawley she of her own accord adopted a milk diet, which had a very good effect both on her spirits and appetite. She felt better than she had been for many months. Bolingbroke was farming in good earnest. It was at this time, as his hopes of seeing Walpole dismissed were declining, that he contracted with an artist at the price of two hundred pounds to paint in black crayons his hall, with rakes, spades, pitchforks, ploughs, harrows, and, indeed, all the implements of rural husbandry. Pope, with a twinkle in his eye, heard him make the bargain. "It is solely," wrote the poet to Swift, "to countenance his calling this place a farm." This letter was written while Bolingbroke was reading one from Swift between two haycocks, and now and then casting his eyes upwards to the clouds in apprehension of a shower; and the malicious sentence about the bargain with the painter was added while the

statesman was running after his cart. A farmer's diet ought to be simple; and Bolingbroke then affected the greatest simplicity, dining with Pope and Lady Bolingbroke, for one whole day, at least, as the poet again maliciously remarked, on mutton broth, beans and bacon, and a barn-door fowl. Swift, who frequently hinted that it was Bolingbroke's neglect of temperance which always occasioned his illness, to improve these rural banquets sent him some usquebaugh from Ireland. It had, however, the fate of many of Swift's presents: two bottles were broken; some of the rest stolen; and the hamper was left by mistake at Bolingbroke's neighbour, Lord Berkeley's, to whom, indeed, somehow or other it had been directed.*

Bolingbroke, however, though he spoke of only farming, philosophy, and retirement, was far from being contented in his mind. He began to regret the heavy expenses into which he had launched at his return to England, when he counted sanguinely on success at court. Large sums of money had been spent over Dawley; other large sums in town; he had all the time lived beyond his income; and he felt most anxious for the future. There seemed no likelihood of his father's death. Lord St. John, notwithstanding the life he had lived, was still at nearly eighty years of age hale, cheery, and hearty; and he bade fair even to outlive his distinguished son. Bolingbroke could not, then, depend on inheriting the family estate and mansion at Battersea; and a troublesome suit in Chancery rendered his income still more uncertain. If old Lord St. John would die, or Walpole be turned out,

* Pope to Swift, June 28, 1728; Gay to Swift, July 6, 1728; Swift to Pope, July 16, 1728; Swift to Mr. Worrall, Sept. 28, 1728.

Bolingbroke's fortune might yet be easy. Otherwise the prospect seemed to him anything but comfortable.*

In the winter his wife was again seriously ill, and they resided in town. He did all he could to animate the opposition, repeating the maxim, "Res volunt diu male administrari," and urging Pulteney and his younger allies to make speeches in the House of Commons, telling them, what he had formerly said to Swift, that a few good speakers in a right cause would in the end carry any point against a ministerial majority. Prevented himself, though the greatest orator of his time, from using his tongue in either House of Parliament, he, however, employed his other weapon, the pen; and at the end of 1728 and at the beginning of 1729 made another vigorous attack on the foreign policy of the Government.

Walpole began to be strongly attacked. Whether he had himself authorized the pretensions of Spain to the restoration of Gibraltar; how far these pretensions had been abandoned; Lord Stanhope's promise; George I.'s promise, and letter; England's refusal of the sole mediatorship at Cambray; and the manner in which, as Bolingbroke and the Opposition asserted, Philip of Spain had been thrown into the hands of the Emperor by the undisguised leaning of England to France—were the fertile topics which for several years employed the tongues and pens of all the enemies of the minister. Bolingbroke still laboured to combine, not always with success, the Tories under Sir William Windham, the Jacobites under Shippen, and the discontented Whigs under Pulteney, in a common assault on the Government. He exercised all his ingenuity, he employed all his talents, for party

* The Egremont Papers: Bolingbroke to Sir W. Windham, March 18, 1736.

organization; he frequently employed his eloquent and graceful pen. Bishop Benjamin Hoadly, of the Bangorian controversy, published a defence of the minister's foreign policy, entitled, An Enquiry into the Reasons of the Conduct of Great Britain; and Walpole was suspected, in his rough-and-ready style, of writing in his own defence some of the many letters which appeared in The London Journal with the signature of Publicola. The Craftsman replied; the ministerial writers rejoined; and Bolingbroke himself, under the homely name of John Trot, appeared as the opponent both of The London Journal and of Hoadly, whom he insinuated might be doing better things than appearing as a political pamphleteer. "I do not," he wrote, "presume to say, for instance, that such a piece was writ by *Ben*, or such a one by *Robin*; but I can plainly distinguish in their productions a difference of style and character. In some I feel myself lulled by a regular, mild, and frequently languid harangue: such as often descends upon us from the pulpit. In others I observe a crude, incoherent, rough, inaccurate, but sometimes sprightly declamation: well enough fitted for popular assemblies, where the majority is already convinced." However, both Publicola and Dr. Hoadly did good service: they returned the ball and kept up the game. Bolingbroke struck it back to them on the 4th of January, and displayed his thorough knowledge of foreign affairs, and his experience of negotiations, in a manner that was not to be mistaken. In this respect, indeed, as well as by his brilliant style, his productions were all distinguished from that of the other correspondents of Mr. Caleb Danvers in the pages of The Craftsman. He writes as a man thoroughly ac-

quainted with the subject; and his hits are always effective.

On the question, indeed, between Walpole and the Opposition, and in all the interminable negotiations and controversies respecting Spanish affairs, which gave the diplomatists of Europe so much employment for so many years, every person will now gladly hear as little as possible. Walpole managed, even under the most inauspicious circumstances, to preserve peace. Spain was at last, by the treaty of Seville, played off against the Emperor; the English Opposition continued to assail the ministers; and their ranks were gradually drawing closer together: but Walpole still kept his place, and his conduct throughout these foreign embroilments can scarcely be pronounced either unsuccessful or injudicious.

The bishop published a defence of his Enquiry, which Bolingbroke as John Trot had somewhat rudely assailed. John Trot, after some delay, wrote a reply to this defence, and the prelate had little reason to be satisfied with the figure he cut in these political controversies. Bolingbroke concluded the last of John Trot's contributions by exhorting the bishop, in a paraphrase of the apostolical constitutions, not to be so ready to make his court, not to bear false witness against his neighbour, nor to become the advocate of private causes; neither to be ambitious, double-minded, double-tongued, deceitful, fallacious, nor sophistical in discourse, as all these things were hateful to God and pleasing to the devil. Yet this sturdy polemic seems to have been a very respectable bishop, as bishops were in the time of the first Georges, when worldliness and latitudinarianism, to a very remarkable degree, seem to have been thought the highest of episcopal qualifica-

tions; and the most worldly-minded of the latitudinarian bishops under the Hanoverian dynasty were certainly not more worldly-minded than Atterbury, whom Oxford and Bolingbroke had raised to the episcopal bench, or than Swift, on whom they would gladly have conferred the mitre. The political bishop, as bishops then wrote politics, has happily become an extinct species.

With all these controversies Bolingbroke still felt that he was making but very little way. He went to Dawley to look after his spring corn, to have some yew hedges removed, to level a mount which he regarded as an eyesore, and to see that his gardeners did their duty. During the last year it had been reported by the newspapers that he was about to write the history of his own times. Swift, who read the report, wrote from Ireland strongly urging him to undertake the task, or at least the history of Queen Anne's last Government. Bolingbroke professed to adopt the hint, and spoke of his intention to collect and arrange materials.*

His wife was again very ill, and he had determined to accompany her to the Continent in the hope that the change of air might do her good. They set out in August, and went at first again to Aix-la-Chapelle, where they drank the waters and remained for about a month. All the morning the waters, he said, kept him fuddled or employed. In the afternoon he and Lady Bolingbroke took the air or made visits; and they retired to rest very early. One day he saw a procession which greatly amused his sceptical turn of mind. An image of Charlemagne was carried on the shoulders of a man who was entirely hidden by the long flowing

* See Swift to Bolingbroke, March 21, 1729.

robes of the imperial effigy. On reaching the vestry, the fellow slipped from under his burden, and the gigantic figure dwindled to the ordinary size and was put away as lumber. So it was, Bolingbroke thought, with the great historical personages of the past. In history and fable they seem of gigantic proportions; but when looked at closely in their private lives, and through the medium of their private letters, they are found to be of the same size as ordinary men.* Lady Bolingbroke's health again improved. From Aix-la-Chapelle, Bolingbroke conducted her by way of Brussels on the road to France. She met, however, with an accident at Rheims, and did not for some weeks reach her usual destination, the Convent of Sens, where she joined her daughter. Bolingbroke returned to England by Ostend. But he was detained by the winds so long that he lost all patience, and at last set off for Calais. At the beginning of October he was again settled at Dawley, conversing with Pope, and concluding a letter to Swift, which he began at Aix-la-Chapelle and continued at Brussels, Ostend, and Calais, full of sublime moralizing on the vanity of human things, the wisdom of economy, and the nothingness of fame.†

Lady Bolingbroke remained in France almost to the end of the following year, 1730. Her most frequent complaint was a slow fever, which seemed gradually undermining her constitution. Death was constantly in her thoughts; but she looked for the event without terror, only regretting it for the sake of her husband and the friends whom she would have to leave. Bolingbroke still loved her as devotedly as when he first became

* See Pope and Bolingbroke to Swift, April 12, 1730.

† Bolingbroke to Swift, from Aix-la-Chapelle, Aug. 30. N.S.; from Brussels Sept. 27, N.S.; Ostend Oct. 5., N.S.; Calais Oct. 9, N.S.; and Dawley, Oct. 5, O.S.

acquainted with her thirteen years before; and during the winter of 1729, and nearly all 1730, was afraid lest he should be summoned to her death-bed in France. If anything happened to her, he declared his intention of retiring altogether from the world, of abandoning even the management of his estate and private affairs, and of spending the remainder of his life in philosophical seclusion. Fortunately a foreign medical adviser prescribed her a remedy which removed the most serious of her complaints; and though she continued but an invalid in a very precarious state, she still lingered on. Bolingbroke's love for his second wife was after his own fashion, though it is one of the most pleasing features of his later years. To her, as to the young men who sought his society he was accustomed to boast of his former gallantries. "Ah!" she said to him one day, with a smile, when he was on this topic, "as I look at you methinks I see the ruins of a fine old Roman aqueduct; but the water has ceased to flow."

Lady Bolingbroke, on her return to England in the winter of 1730, spent some days in Paris. One of her friends, M. d'Albin, sounded her about the Pretender. For some time she parried his questions: at last, however, she spoke more openly, and declared herself James's friend, regretting, however, his treatment of her husband, who, she said, from his great abilities, could have done more for him than all the rest of his adherents together. She also spoke disparagingly of Atterbury's political talents, adding that, though he might be a great man, others acted with more prudence and took a more effectual way to further their ends. The particulars of this private conference with Lady Bolingbroke were communicated by M. d'Albin to a spy of the English Government, and were by him sent to Walpole. They

must not be taken literally. But even according to them, Lady Bolingbroke resisted for some time every attempt to draw her out, then spoke very doubtfully, and only gave a kind of verbal adhesion to the cause of the Stuarts. Assuredly Bolingbroke had in no respect softened in his just indignation against the Pretender, nor had he any share in Atterbury's schemes, which were only terminated by that restless prelate's death.*

In the writings which Bolingbroke was at that time contributing to the Craftsman, there was certainly nothing of Jacobitism. He, indeed, in the most marked manner, and the strongest phrases, repudiated the cause of the Stuarts.

The Opposition, with Pulteney at its head, had acted most vigorously against the Government in the session of 1730. Bolingbroke had also sent his own private secretary, Brinsden, to Dunkirk to examine the state of the fortifications, which Walpole was accused of allowing to be rebuilt. After the termination of the parliamentary campaign, Bolingbroke still carried on the warfare with equal ardour through the press. He began a series of letters, which were subsequently collected and published together as Remarks on the History of England, by Humphrey Oldcastle. They professed, in the first papers, to be the literal transcript of discussions carried on in a political club, of which the oracle was "an ancient venerable gentleman," whose discourses always convinced his hearers, and were received with respectful deference. The old sage might indeed typify Bolingbroke, in the position he was then assuming as the teacher and counsellor of the younger members of the

* This letter from the spy to Walpole is dated Paris, Dec. 2, 1730, and will be found extracted from the Townshend Papers, in a note to the ninth volume of Bowles' edition of Pope, p. 175.

Opposition. But the machinery of the club was neither an original nor a happy invention. There was nothing dramatic in Bolingbroke's genius, and the first two letters, which are professedly couched in that form, are certainly the least interesting. The discourses of "the ancient venerable gentleman" were justly pronounced by the ministerial writers in the Daily Courant and The London Journal to be very prolix; and Bolingbroke, always sensitive on the score of criticism, went out of his way to reply to their taunts, and asked them if an essay of two or three columns might not be longer than one of five or six? In the fourth contribution he abandoned the dramatic form and wrote with more brevity and directness other twenty letters on English history.

Many of them are flowing and animated as compositions. They were received with all the delight of novelty by the readers of that day. Chesterfield afterwards pronounced them to be a model of style: "Transcribe, imitate, emulate," he wrote to his son. They were, however, somewhat desultory, and were evidently written as rapidly as they could be penned. They cannot be said to make a good collected whole. It must be confessed, too, that under the flowing and brilliant surface of the stream there is but little depth. Some of the maxims which are laid down as undeniable truths are of questionable soundness, and there is frequently a want of pertinence in the application of the remarks. They do not rank high as contributions to political philosophy. The mind refuses to see throughout the whole history of England a distorted image of Walpole in every corrupt minister, or the figure of little pompous George II. in every imbecile sovereign. Even a historical parallel is also

found, with questionable prudence, to Queen Caroline, in Edward IV.'s queen, patient, submissive, and tolerating the King's infidelities in order to maintain her influence over him and govern in public affairs. The old gentleman, in the first letter, lays it down as a fundamental axiom of political science that liberty is more easily attacked, and with more difficulty defended, in a limited monarchy than in a perfect democracy or a mixed republic : a conclusion which has surely been contradicted by all experience, and never more so than during the four or five generations which have gone since the days of Bolingbroke, or than during the times in which we live. Some of the remarks are highly amusing for the ingenuity by which the proceedings of former ages are perverted into attacks on the Walpole ministry. Bolingbroke wanted party and ecclesiastical distinctions to be sunk, in order that all sects and denominations might unite in opposing the Government. We are therefore told that even in the reign of King John high and low church united in a common cause; and that though the King blustered and drew out his army, it was still a British army. Thus Magna Charta was won. The wisdom of Edward III., as an example, and the folly of Richard, as a warning, are equally instructive to readers in the time of George II. Edward III. began a war with German allies; but he soon adopted better expedients. The unexperienced and ill-designing persons stigmatised in one of the thirty-four articles in the instrument of Richard II.'s resignation, are by implication made to reflect very unmistakably on the two brothers, Horace and Robert Walpole; and in each of Richard II.'s favourites we are taught to behold a Walpole. The two letters, indeed, on Edward III. and Richard II. were thought so directly

personal and offensive that a prosecution was begun against Franklin, the printer of the Craftsman. He was, however, in no danger. The Government really acted with moderation. The best answer to the charges of tyranny and oppression, which Bolingbroke and the Opposition brought against Walpole, is the fact that such writings as Bolingbroke was then giving to the world were allowed to be published with impunity. The Opposition was permitted steadily to increase in strength, and the Craftsman to fan the rising flame almost without molestation from the Government. Such would assuredly not have been the case in the last years of Queen Anne's reign. From that time the nation had made a great leap. Bolingbroke was, indeed, as he declared, doing the country service by keeping alive the spirit of liberty. By the Craftsman the freedom of the press was being powerfully asserted, and the age of journalism was coming in.

Appealing to the people against the Government, and seeking to render popular the ingenious historical parallels in which these letters abound, the views which Bolingbroke generally took of English history were essentially popular. Though in the controversies which he provoked, his enemies sought eagerly to fasten the charge of Jacobitism upon him, not only is Jacobitism repudiated, but even moderate Toryism, and the spirit throughout is thoroughly Whiggish, and even democratic. The Stuarts at his hands find neither sympathy nor mercy. He had in three former papers of the Craftsman made an elaborate contrast between the wisdom of Queen Elizabeth's Government and the folly of James I.'s.* He still further, in several of these letters, illustrated the subject in every respect to the disad-

* The Craftsman, Nos. 137, 138, 139.

vantage of James and his successor Charles I. No language could anywhere be found more contemptuous of the pedantic British Solomon. Divine, hereditary, indefeasible right is ridiculed as the most wretched of absurdities. Laud is declared to have been not fit to govern a small college, much less to become the ruler of a great kingdom. Charles I. is represented as one of the weakest of sovereigns; the assertion against him of what is somewhat vaguely called the spirit of liberty is loudly applauded; and in his favourite Buckingham we are again told to recognize Walpole.

At this period, however, Bolingbroke pauses. He doubtless felt that he could scarcely carry his historical parallels further down without giving offence to some portion of the heterogeneous Opposition. His last letter, the twenty-fourth, is devoted to a reply to the ministerial writers who had assailed him fiercely throughout the series; and he enters into a defence of Pulteney and himself from the charges which had been so loudly brought against them as the two great patrons of the Craftsman. This letter appeared on the 22nd of May, 1731. It set all Walpole's hack writers in a ferment, and disturbed even his own conscious superiority and jovial equanimity. Pulteney was separately assailed. An elaborate answer to that portion of the twenty-fourth letter relating to Bolingbroke's conduct was published, entitled, Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication, and it bore unmistakable evidence of the minister's inspiration, if not of his own pen. Bolingbroke at last replied in a pamphlet with A Final Answer to the Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication; and the controversy became again, as in 1728, a fierce and somewhat dangerous warfare of personality.

Enough has been said on these disputed points of Bolingbroke's public life as they have arisen in the course of this narrative. It would be difficult, indeed, to defend him altogether from the charge of ingratitude to the Duke of Marlborough, whose confidence he had possessed, and who had been his warm friend and patron.* To Godolphin he does not appear to have owed any particular obligations. His positive and repeated declaration, that he did not enter into any engagement with the Pretender until after the Act of Attainder had been introduced, I have shown to be contradicted by the clearest evidence. But that he ever was at heart a Jacobite, that he ever betrayed the Pretender's interests to Lord Stair, or that he had not a promise of a complete pardon from George I., are accusations which, though then loudly asserted by the ministerial writers, and countenanced by Walpole himself, must by all impartial persons be regarded as most invidious, unjust, and false.

To have to defend himself from such charges was no pleasing task for Bolingbroke in the summer of 1731. He was at that time characteristically leading two lives: one, that of an eloquent and vehement political writer, the other, that of a retired philosopher investigating through the lore of all ages the deepest questions which can employ the human intellect. Pope, after his brilliant satire on the dunces, was now, by Bolingbroke's advice, engaged on his Essay on Man; and, to illustrate the system of philosophy on which they had discoursed together in Pope's garden and grotto, accompanied occasionally during two former summers by Swift and Arbuthnot, Bolingbroke was busily composing, in a series of essays or letters addressed to Pope, a philosophical system into

* See Marchmont Papers (note), ii., 214.

which his former chronological investigations had finally merged. The matter flowed in upon his pen. His essays soon became volumes. Lord Bathurst afterwards declared that he had seen the very plan of the Essay on Man in Bolingbroke's handwriting before it was put into verse by Pope; and though Dr. Johnson was somewhat sceptical of the truth of this assertion, it was, at all events, made on good authority. But, in reality, all Bolingbroke's philosophical compositions were avowedly written for Pope's instruction, and to afford him materials for the series of ethical poems which he contemplated, and which he only partly completed. So early as the autumn of 1729 the first portion of the Essay on Man was in progress. It was called by Pope a system of ethics in the Horatian way, and received Bolingbroke's warmest approbation.* The two friends worked at their poetry and philosophy for several years, and Bolingbroke was industriously rearing a vast philosophical system which he evidently intended to be regarded as the most enduring monument of his genius, and of the immeasurable superiority of his intellect over that of all divines and all other philosophers.

About these philosophical works, which make up about one half of the collected series of Bolingbroke's writings, much, indeed, might be said. Biographically, however, it would be of but little importance, nor would it much interest nor edify any reader of the present day. Notwithstanding the pretensions with which they were composed, these philosophical works never made the slightest impression upon the public, and, in fact, only served to increase the obloquy with which his name had so long been covered. When can-

* See Pope to Swift, Nov. 28, 1729.

didly examined, with many admirable illustrations, there is very little of novelty in these writings; and, indeed, to the name of philosophy, in any high sense of the word, they scarcely have a claim. A very few observations upon them, and those rather of a biographical than a critical nature, may here suffice.

We saw Bolingbroke at La Source deeply engaged, with little satisfaction to himself, in the most abstruse chronological investigations. Any system, he declared in the Letters to M. de Pouilly, might be supported by chronology. He could, by the same authorities, prove that there had been four Assyrian monarchies, that there had been three, that there had been two, that there had been one, or that there had never been an Assyrian monarchy at all. In criticizing a theological work of Swift's friend, Dr. Delany, Bolingbroke, in the August of 1731, repeated these sentiments, and avowed all his former contempt for Sir John Marsham and every chronological system.* He at last, however, proceeded much further. With the aid of Locke he constructed an anti-metaphysical system, primarily intended to show that we know nothing except through the medium of the senses; and that from the very construction of the human mind, we can know nothing more. In his introductory letter to Pope, Bolingbroke declares what he means by the first philosophy: according to him it is simply natural theology or theism, a religion of natural ethics. Hence, natural theology is only to him a part of natural philosophy; and can be established only by the same method of Baconian induction. We can see God by the light of nature, as it pleases Him to exhibit himself in His works; and Bolingbroke attempts elaborately to show, in his Essay on Human Knowledge,

* See the Letter to Swift, Aug. 2, 1721.

which was really composed the last of the series, that this is all we can ever know. This knowledge is all derived from sensation, and is merely relative to ourselves and the position in which we find ourselves in the universe. We see as through a glass darkly. We know nothing beyond the ken of our own imperfect vision. The light of nature teaches us, however, to know God. We can see Him in simplicity, in majesty, in uniformity: this is natural religion, far superior to any taught by philosophers or divines. On the all-sufficiency of the light of nature, Bolingbroke, throughout this series of essays, eloquently expatiates; and in the second, which he entitles, On the Folly and Presumption of Philosophers, while assailing most of the notions entertained by the great sages of antiquity, he endeavours to prove that all that is really excellent in Christianity had been known to the rest of the world long before the birth of Christ. He denies that the Jews entertained more elevated ideas of the Deity than other nations; and affirms, on the contrary, that none ever held more gross and degrading. Next to his utter detestation of the Jews, and of their lawgiver, Moses, is his contempt for Plato, whom he calls a madman, a rogue, a sceptic under the mask of a dogmatist, and the visionary author of all the theological corruptions which, under the name of Christianity, have been grafted on natural religion. Artificial theology, the spurious offspring of artificial philosophy, had become the abomination of mankind. There had been no wars like religious wars; there had never, indeed, been a religious persecution until Christianity had become established in the world. Christianity had not reformed the morals of mankind; it had not made men better. The elementary principles, indeed, were those of the

religion of nature; and, so far as these had been conformed to, it had produced good, but in every other respect evil.

Monotheism, as the first and great principle of natural religion, and, borrowed from it, of Christianity, is the subject of Bolingbroke's third essay. He again assails the Jews, and Locke for maintaining that they had sublimer ideas of God than the rest of the world. He asserts that the true notion of the uniformity of God was held by the Egyptians, and was derived from them by Moses; that it was held even by the Chinese; and that the God of Nature was indeed always visible, even in the most minute parts of his works. Here Bolingbroke, while ridiculing the ideas entertained by nearly all the wisest of the ancients about the Supreme Being, still affirms that even savages, by the mere use of their reason, could attain a thorough knowledge of God in His unity. In the fourth essay, headed Concerning Authority in Matters of Religion, he again, as in the volume of Fragments and Minutes of Essays, which followed, it, repeats much of what he had said before. Plato is again assailed in every variety of diction, and next to Plato, St. Paul is fiercely stigmatized as the corrupter of natural religion: the great chief of the academy, and the apostle of the Gentiles, share between them the post of honour in being attacked by Bolingbroke as the champion of Providence; and they both come in for some very eloquent, but also some very unphilosophical vituperation.

It is not necessary to proceed with this brief analysis further. It is sufficient to observe that Bolingbroke, in these essays, while ingeniously endeavouring in every way to sap all faith in revealed religion, nowhere openly avows himself a disbeliever in its authenticity.

His scepticism is not veiled, and yet it is denied. He practises an artifice which is somewhat ingenious, and which was carried to much greater perfection by other sceptics. The abuses of religion only he professedly assails, though the logical conclusion from all his reasoning is that it is impossible Christianity should be true. He endeavours throughout to assume that it was grafted on natural religion, and he is always drawing a parallel between them to the disadvantage of the Gospel.* He everywhere, too, speaks of himself as a friend of religion, while, in fact, he is doing everything to destroy its sacredness. The whole gist of what he called his philosophy may be given in his own words: "God has proportioned in every respect our means of knowledge to our station here, and to our real wants in it. The bodies that surround us operate continually on us; and these operations concern not only our well or ill being but our very being. We are fitted, therefore, to acquire, by the help of our senses properly employed, by experiment and industry, such a degree of human knowledge about them as is sufficient for the necessary uses of human life and no more." Hence, according to Bolingbroke, creatures of circumstances, of the circumstances that surround us, we are, and cannot help being. The actual was with him everything. He delighted to say to all mankind, and especially to philosophers and divines, Thus far can you go, and no further.

Such was the philosophy which has been so loudly reprobated. Bolingbroke wished himself to be regarded as the great high priest of natural religion; but his fundamental error was to set about writing on religion at all. He ought to have remembered the rebuke he

* See Essay 4, section 7.

received from the Pretender when he remonstrated with him on the alterations in the proclamation of September 1715 : "You are not considered the fittest person to speak about religion." This reproach was then misapplied, because Bolingbroke was at least a statesman, and had a right to judge of the effect which certain words in the proclamation would produce on the minds of his Tory friends, who were anxious for the security of the Church of England. But he was in no respect a divine, and to write on religion was certainly not his province. His life had been sensual, worldly, and ambitious. He had no sympathy with the most vital of truths, and could not estimate their effect upon others, because they awoke no response within his own bosom. These philosophical writings are bad, not so much because they are sceptical, nor because their tendency is pernicious, but because the spirit in which they are written is essentially self-sufficient, immoral, commonplace, and false. Neither in the breast of the Christian nor of the sceptic who is really a worshipper of truth do they kindle any sympathy. Their very philosophy is unphilosophical. Throughout the two quarto volumes and a half of these anti-metaphysical speculations we see only one bold ambitious spirit, Henry St. John Viscount Bolingbroke, who, shut out by circumstances from ruling in the world of politics, wishes to rule in unquestioned supremacy over the intellectual world, and who cannot bear to admit of a superior either in active or speculative life.

His attacks on Christianity are distinguished from those of the most philosophical of sceptics by their thorough bitterness. Thinkers like Hume found Christianity opposed to their systems, and they therefore rejected Christianity; but Bolingbroke appears to

have constructed his system mainly as an engine of assault against Christianity. It must be confessed that some of his most laboured passages, except in style, scarcely rise above the level of the Tolands and the Tindals of his day. They are not original; they are not profound: we frequently see the will more than the power to injure. They certainly do not rank in an equal class with the philosophical works of Cudworth, Clarke, Berkeley, and Butler, whom Bolingbroke continually assails. Hobbes was a sceptic of a higher form; so also was Hume. Bolingbroke's writings on these subjects are just what they might have been expected to be from his want of philosophical training, his imperious disposition, his love of speculation and controversy, and the restlessness of his intellect, pining for action in a more congenial sphere. Perhaps, indeed, they rather sink below than rise above the level which he might be thought qualified to attain. As we can trace in Swift's misanthrophical writings, such as his sketches of the Yahoos, and his panegyric on the Honyhnhnms, the effect of his political disappointments, confined like a wild beast in a cage to a country he hated, and hopelessly shut out from being that companion and adviser of ministers and princes he considered he had the right to be, so a similar spirit may be traced throughout the philosophical works of Bolingbroke. Disappointment followed disappointment; expectation after expectation was frustrated. His years of matured manhood were slipping away and old age was approaching, while he still found himself left behind in the political race; not only deprived of ministerial power, but even of his seat in the legislature, over whose deliberations he had in youth exercised a paramount influence. Hence he appeared to have constructed a

system of philosophy in a spirit of intellectual cynicism, and wished to degrade the nature he shared, in common with the rest of mankind, to the level of the beasts.

Assuredly in these writings he exhibits a melancholy picture. That they should be the composition of a statesman, of one who confesses that the vulgar ought to be governed by vulgar opinions, and that it is a base and wicked thing to try to destroy the effect of religion on their minds, is perhaps their saddest feature. Bolingbroke tries to get rid of this reproach by declaring that he only wrote for a few friends, and particularly Pope, who is always introduced as a kind of chorus, and the Roman Catholic creed made throughout a subject of running commentary. But they were evidently intended from the first for publication; and the manner in which they were left, with notes after notes added to the latest period of Bolingbroke's life, puts the question beyond all doubt. The manuscripts, carefully copied out, may still be examined in the British Museum. No more perfect copy could be found of any posthumous work.

It is amusing to trace occasionally Bolingbroke's old Tory politics, even in writings of which the effect logically was to subvert Christianity, and, indeed, all ecclesiastical institutions. Once or twice it seems to have occurred to him that such compositions were not exactly what might be expected from the Tory and high churchman he formerly professed to be. While sapping every foundation of the Christian faith, he therefore still takes care to affirm his attachment to the Church of England. At the close of the fourth essay, in which St. Paul and the Christian fathers are treated with such scant respect, not to say scurrilous profanity, and the effect of Christianity as an instrument in the

reformation of manners plainly declared to have been pernicious, Bolingbroke still argues that there ought to be an established church in a nation, and that this church ought to be maintained in unquestioned supremacy over all dissenting sects and forms of worship. This portentous conclusion, in which, though censuring Christianity for the persecutions to which it gave rise, he still manages to maintain in himself some of the spirit of a persecutor, it is best to give in his own unqualified words: "To make government effectual," he says, "there must be a religion: this religion must be national; and this national religion must be maintained in reputation and reverence: all other religions or sects must be kept too low to become the rivals of it. These are, in my apprehension, the first principles of good policy." *

This ludicrous inconsistency, of which he shows a somewhat angry consciousness, is attended by others quite as absurd. There is throughout these speculations a want of logical precision. The epistolary form in which they are couched, and the rhetorical style which he preserves, are fatal to that philosophical clearness which is always desirable in such discourses. Many of his pictures of the ancient philosophers and their philosophy are lively and ingenious, but much too sketchy. They leave no definite impression. He takes up, abandons, and resumes a subject at his pleasure, seldom fully develops his ideas, but generally rambles at will through those philosophical mazes in which he delights to tread in a proud, contemptuous, superior, and self-conscious spirit. Notwithstanding the attractions of Bolingbroke's style, these philosophical speculations are somewhat dreary reading.

* Essay 4, section 41.

The mind is dazzled, perplexed, wearied, saddened, and unconvinced; and few of the most industrious students who begin resolutely the perusal of Essay the First, On Human Knowledge, ever get to the end of the Fragments and Minutes of Essays in the last volume.

One of the strangest questions connected with the subject of Bolingbroke's philosophy relates to the real sentiments of Pope with respect to the scepticism of his friend. There is no doubt whatever but that Pope received from Bolingbroke the leading principles of his Essay on Man. Pope, indeed, acknowledges his obligations in the fullest sense at the beginning of the first and at the close of the fourth book; and, notwithstanding Warburton's defence, the Essay on Man and the principles of Bolingbroke must be considered one and the same, though they are less openly expressed in the poem, and disguised with poetical ornament. It is impossible to find in a single couplet any acknowledgment of revealed religion; but, on the contrary, all that admiration of nature, of looking upward through Nature's works to Nature's God, which was Bolingbroke's main tenet. The leading sentiments of the Essay on Man may not altogether deserve Dr. Johnson's contemptuous sarcasm; yet their tendency, so far as they have a tendency, is undoubtedly to that blind fatalism and naturalism which Bolingbroke called pure theism. His condemnation of metaphysics really meant everything that is called theology.

Was Pope, then, it has been asked, really not aware of the tendency of the writings which were addressed to himself, and the doctrines he asserted in his own poem? We may or we may not believe that Bolingbroke laughed, as has been stated, at making Pope the poetical mouthpiece of his scepticism, which the simple poet

took for the pure gospel of orthodox truth. But though Pope's religion sat somewhat loosely upon him, it is difficult to suppose that he ever wished to be thought the opponent of Christianity. The alarm he afterwards showed at the attacks of the Swiss professor, Crousaz, and the gratitude he always felt to Warburton for defending him from such imputations, ought to be decisive on this question. Pope was no philosopher; for philosophy as for politics he cared very little: he was not inclined to set himself antagonistic to the opinions and prejudices of mankind. It was not respectable to attack Christianity, and Pope always wished to be respectable. Two of his most severe lines in the Dunciad he had levelled at Toland and Tindal—

> "Toland and Tindal prompt at priests to jeer,
> Yet silent bowed to Christ's No Kingdom here."*

Are we then to suppose that the poet himself wished to be regarded as one who jeered at priests and wished to see established Christ's No Kingdom? He thought it poetical to write about nature, and satirical to rail at superstition and tyranny, but his views do not appear to have extended further. To him the great conclusion that "whatever is is right" was eminently orthodox; to Bolingbroke it had quite another meaning. Pope was absolutely fascinated by his friend's life and genius. He never thought of criticizing or analyzing Bolingbroke's philosophy. It seemed plausible, and was full of glare. Pope's eyes were completely dazzled by its brilliancy. His only feeling with respect to these writings of Bolingbroke was wonder, and he rejoiced that it was by his influence, as he thought, that Bolingbroke appeared to give up politics and devoted himself to

* The Dunciad, Book ii., lines 367 and 368.

such sublime speculations. "I hope you will live," Pope wrote to Swift of Bolingbroke, "to see and stare at the learned figure he will make on the same shelf with Locke and Malbranche." * This was Pope's abiding sentiment on the subject. Little did he foresee, because he was really unacquainted with their tendency, what a storm of indignation and obloquy these writings would raise against their author and himself.

Pope, however, was obliged to confess that, in spite of philosophy, the field of politics continued to have for Bolingbroke irresistible attractions. In his very next letter to Swift, the poet regretfully observed: "Lord Bolingbroke is voluminous; but he is voluminous only to destroy volumes; I shall not live, I fear, to see that work printed: he is so taken up still (in spite of the monitory hint given him in the first line of my Essay) with particular men, that he neglects mankind, and is still a creature of this world, not of the universe."† Bolingbroke could not subdue his nature. He would confine himself for months together at Dawley, dine on the simplest food, dress himself in a rustic suit, go to bed at nine o'clock in the evening, and rise at five the next day, and moralize most eloquently and beautifully on the decay of passion and the happiness of retirement. A fine letter, which he wrote to Swift at six of the clock one morning, in this philosophical vein, has been much and deservedly admired, and for this reason is too well known to require any further quotation. But the gales of passion soon began again to blow; and frequently they burst into a storm.

In his private life during these years there had been but little variation. Scarcely anything had oc-

* Pope to Swift, Sept. 15, 1734.
† Pope to Swift, Dec. 19, 1734.

curred to require any particular biographical notice. He and Pope both recommended to Swift Mr. Wesley, a poor and aged Tory clergyman, whose house had been twice burnt down, and who had published a Latin commentary on the book of Job; and this clergyman, though the editors of Swift's correspondence have not deemed the circumstance worthy of notice—not even the generous and many-sided Walter Scott*—was the father of John and Charles Wesley, whose names were to become household words at many firesides in England and America, and whose lives and works were to afford some commentary on the qualifications of the Hanoverian bishops and the pertinency of Bolingbroke's philosophy. Bolingbroke in this year had another object in view. He actually believed that Swift was in earnest when he constantly complained of the hardship of being condemned, through Oxford's neglect, to exile in Ireland; and he had formed a plan by which Swift could exchange his dignity in the Irish church for a clergyman's living in Berkshire. Swift, however, when the question came for his decision, was by no means prepared to give up his Irish deanery for a living in Bolingbroke's neighbourhood of four hundred a year, even though it had attached to it the additional attraction, as Bolingbroke assured him, of being only within half a day's ride from Dawley.† John Barber, the printer, with whom Swift and Bolingbroke had formerly been so closely connected, was Mayor of London in 1733. He won the hearts of his two former patrons by the opposition he offered to Walpole's Excise Act. He dined frequently with Bolingbroke at Dawley, and Swift wrote him a warm letter of thanks. The approbation of these

* See Scott's edition of Swift, xvii., 299 (note).

† Bolingbroke to Swift, July 18, 1732.

great friends from whom, as Barber said, he had had the happiness of early learning honest principles, gave him that peace of mind which the whole world could not purchase.*

The storm of popular fury which greeted Walpole's excise scheme awakened all the ambition of Bolingbroke. It was a great opportunity: he declaimed eloquently in the Craftsman against excises; he took up his residence in town, eagerly prompting Sir William Windham, for whom he wrote many of his speeches, and, in fact, always made him the vehicle of his sentiments to the House of Commons. Some of the powerful declamations which Windham delivered against Walpole, and which excited the admiration and the surprise of the Opposition, were, in truth, Bolingbroke's own speeches, delivered almost word for word by his faithful and devoted "Willie."

It seemed in the debates on the excise proposition that Walpole must inevitably perish. But the minister allowed the bill to drop; the storm gradually subsided; and Walpole's power appeared only the more firmly established by the decided measures he took to punish the waverers and the disaffected in the ministerial ranks. Chesterfield was dismissed from the post of Lord Steward, and Lord Stair from that of Vice-Admiral of Scotland. Other noblemen, the Dukes of Bolton and Montrose, and the Lords Cobham, Marchmont, Clinton, Burlington, all felt the effects of the minister's indignation. Bolingbroke saw this display of ministerial vigour with joy. The dismissed lords were, with scarcely an exception, important additions to the strength of the Opposition. Lord Stair was a statesman and soldier of great experience, and Bolingbroke's friend;

* See Barber's Letter to Swift from Goldsmiths' Hall, Aug. 6, 1733.

Chesterfield, a man of talents and accomplishments, was the leader of fashion; and some of the other noblemen possessed abilities and virtues such as it could not be to the advantage of any government to count among its foes. The Opposition became more formidable as Walpole's power became more despotic. In the session of 1734, the minority in the House of Commons made repeated efforts to bring about his overthrow, and Bolingbroke was more decidedly than ever the great political prompter behind the scenes.

In the pages of the Craftsman he also made another elaborate and continuous attack on Walpole. It consisted of a series of nineteen letters, entitled A Dissertation on Parties. They were eagerly read at the time, and republished in a collected form, with a dedication to the minister. They may be justly regarded as the ablest and the most celebrated of all Bolingbroke's writings against Walpole's administration. Here again, indeed, as in all Bolingbroke's political compositions, after the Letter to Sir William Windham, we find nothing of Toryism. In the preface or dedication which was afterwards added, he expressly says that he wishes to revive and maintain the spirit of old Whiggism; and, in truth, many of his definitions and assertions are such as many Whigs, even at this day, would consider too democratic. His descriptions of a king and a bishop are in a strain lower than those of Paley, and would certainly have raised the anger of George III. "A king," wrote Bolingbroke, "is really nothing more than a supreme magistrate, instituted for the service of the community, which requires that the executive power should be vested in a single person. He hath, indeed, a crown on his head, a sceptre in his hand, and velvet robes on his back, and he sits elevated on a

throne, whilst others stand on the ground about him; and all this to denote that he is a king, and to draw the attention and reverence of the vulgar."* In what a different spirit is this from that in which Marlborough was taken from the command of his victorious army, and prosecuted as a peculator by the House of Commons, all because, as Mr. Secretary St. John declared, he had offended Queen Anne! At that time Mr. St. John, commenting, as we have seen, on those violent party proceedings, wrote to the Earl of Strafford: "What passed on Thursday in the House of Commons will, I hope, show people abroad, as well as at home, that no merit, no grandeur, no riches, can excuse or save any, who sets himself up in opposition to the Queen."† There was indeed a changed world, and along with it Bolingbroke had changed. A bishop is declared in the Dissertation on Parties to be only "a man with a mitre on his head, a crosier in his hand, and lawn sleeves, and sits in a purple elbow-chair, to denote that he is a bishop, and to excite the devotion of the multitude." This idea of a bishop would certainly have been thought very latitudinarian in Burnet or Tillotson. The Revolution, too, which Bolingbroke had formerly declared to have been carried on contrary to the soundest principles of Tory policy, and the interests of the landed gentry and the Church of England, is represented as the period when all that was intelligible in the war-cries of the two contending factions, Whig and Tory, ceased. From that time, he said, they had no real meaning at all. To argue otherwise, he maintained, was to say worse of the Revolution than "it was in the power of a vain, forward, and turbulent preacher to cast upon it, by his frothy decla-

* Letter 14. † See ante, 255.

mation."* Such was Bolingbroke's real opinion of Sacheverell, and his appreciation of this instrument, by which Harley and St. John had climbed to power. Bolingbroke, also, though taunting Walpole with tyranny and oppression, now speaks kindly of the dissenters, and rejoices in the tolerant spirit that everywhere prevailed. No higher praise can be given to the progress of those moderate principles in government of which Walpole was in some sort the representative, than to find Bolingbroke, who had been the great advocate of the Bill against Occasional Conformity, and the author of the Schism Act, both of which, after the accession of the House of Hanover, were most righteously repealed, saying about the dissenters that, "far from desiring to impose any new hardships upon them, even those who have been reputed their enemies, and who have acted as such on several occasions, acknowledge their error. Experience hath removed prejudice. They see that indulgence hath done what severity never could."† So little, indeed, was Bolingbroke now a Tory, that, in tracing the history of the two parties in the reign of Charles II. and James II., he goes even further than many Whig writers, and pronounces for the justice and expediency of the Exclusion Bill.‡

On the general question that all parties are evils, as Bolingbroke undertakes to show, by tracing the history of the two great English parties in the first ten of these Letters, it is not necessary to say much. It is certain that in one form or another there always have been parties in free countries, and that there always will be. Such connections are liable to great abuse, and were as much abused by Bolingbroke as by any statesman

* Letter 19. † Letter 1.

‡ See Letter 4, and the emphatic beginning of Letter 6.

who ever became a party leader. But great traditional combinations, acting together on public grounds, to carry out great principles, may be made the depository and school of every public virtue. Politicians are surely much more likely, when they agree in their general views of affairs, to promote the interests of the state by acting together, than by standing jealously separate as solitary units. Everything had shown since the Revolution that some understanding and co-operation were necessary among those who carried on or supported the government; and for a similar reason a kind of organization was necessary to the Opposition. Bolingbroke had himself industriously laboured to form the Opposition that then existed against Walpole, and while denouncing all political connections was forming a party on the ruins of party. His theory was in his circumstances a necessity; but his practice had been and continued to be altogether different. There must still, he admitted, be a court and country party, though Whig and Tory were to be heard of no more.

That very corruption, indeed, which Bolingbroke deplored, has always been found to exist, in a greater and more hopeless degree, without party connection than with it. A minister who governs by party may dispense with corruption; but in the last century, at least, without government by party, corruption was inevitable. The "King's friends" of George III., who professed to be independent of parties, were the most corrupt section of politicians existing in their day. They were, in reality, only a body of political mercenaries acting for hire in the service of the court for or against the minister of the time being, according to what they supposed to be their sovereign's inclinations. Though Bolingbroke tries, indeed, to conceal the fact, corruption

with Walpole was always a subordinate instrument to his great lever of party connection; and, in truth, the two leading accusations, of governing by corruption, and governing by party, partly destroy each other. Walpole was, indeed, blameable for his want of moral elevation, and his disregard of public opinion, the power of which he greatly underrated; and Bolingbroke, though some of these letters abound in passages of declamation which good taste may consider tawdry and puerile, was doing good service by his eloquent championship of public virtue. Still, justice compels us to admit that Bolingbroke cannot be regarded as a purer statesman than Walpole; and, judging from his practice when he had power, which is the only unerring test of political professions, few people can believe that, had he been then in office, instead of writing the Dissertation on Parties, that his administration would have been milder, less corrupt, and more beneficial to the interests of the country than that of his successful rival.

The Dissertation on Parties was ironically dedicated to Walpole in a style which assuredly Bolingbroke as a minister would never have allowed any one to address to him with impunity. It is certainly anything but a true description of the means by which Walpole had attained power to say that it was "by wriggling, intriguing, whispering, and bargaining himself into the dangerous post to which he was not called by the general suffrage, nor, perhaps, by the deliberate choice of his master himself." Though Walpole was greedy of power, and may not have altogether acted equitably to some of his colleagues, yet assuredly he had risen to his high eminence not by intrigue, but by great parliamentary services. His successes had been

legitimate. He was the recognized and trusted chief of a great party; and the confidence that was deservedly placed in him had been the result of a long and tried experience. Everybody now acknowledges that the nation reaped many blessings under his government. Bolingbroke and the Opposition might excite the public mind by their brilliant invectives against tyranny, corruption, and wicked ministers; but the prosperity of the country was steadily increasing, commerce was extending on every sea, new hives of industry were being raised throughout the globe by English enterprise, and at home peace, order, and security everywhere prevailed.

The controversy between Bolingbroke and Walpole had, as the Vindication proved, again become entirely personal. When these letters appeared in the pages of the Craftsman, some of the ministerial writers threatened Bolingbroke with Walpole's vengeance; and Bolingbroke himself taunted Walpole with the threats of his hireling scribblers. Walpole's habitual moderation of temper wisely prevailed; he all but allowed Bolingbroke to write against him as he pleased; and, during these years of a somewhat irritating opposition, almost contented himself with once returning the compliment by delivering a studied invective against Bolingbroke in the House of Commons. This occurred in the session of 1734, in reply to Sir William Windham, when the materials of the Tory baronet's speech were evidently all supplied by Bolingbroke. A bill was introduced to repeal the Septennial Act, which Bolingbroke also assailed in his Dissertation on Parties. The Whigs, in opposition, somewhat reluctantly acquiesced in the proposed repeal, which, however, was more enthusiastically supported by the Tories. Sir William

Windham's speech on this question was considered his masterpiece. Taking the liberty, as he said, of "supposing," he drew a strong caricature of Walpole as a minister lost to virtue and honour; of no great family, and of but a mean fortune; ignorant of the true interests of his country; acquiring great wealth by plundering the nation; buying a parliamentary majority with the public money; keeping his sovereign in the same state of ignorance and corruption as himself; and depending for the continuance of his power on the maintenance of the Septennial Act. In Sir William's picture there was something very harsh and invidious: but nothing was then considered by the Opposition bad enough to be said of Walpole. The minister, however, being thus assailed, and knowing from whom the matter of Sir William's invective had been derived, retorted with another "supposition," and, by drawing another picture of an ante-minister and a mock patriot. Walpole began by informing the House that no person within the walls could come under the description of the person he supposed. This gentleman thought himself of such extensive parts and eminent qualifications that he regarded himself as the only person fit to conduct the affairs of the nation, and spoke of every other public man in office as a blunderer. He had gained over to his side some other gentlemen of good families, great wealth, and excellent abilities, as well as a few others of desperate fortunes. They became puppets in his hands, and spoke what he put into their mouths; yet, though he had constituted himself their leader, he was not liked even by those who blindly followed him, and was hated by the rest of mankind. He was in a country where he really ought not to be, and where he could only have been by the effect of his sovereign's

goodness and mercy. He endeavoured to destroy the fountain whence that mercy flowed. He continually contracted familiarities and friendships with the ambassadors of the countries believed at any time to be at enmity with his own. He endeavoured by their agency to discover any secrets which might be prejudicial to his native land, and sought by his mouthpieces in the House of Commons to procure for those ambassadors information which might be equally injurious. He had travelled much. At every court he had wished to be regarded as the greatest minister the world had ever seen; and always had made it his business to betray at one court the secrets which in the utmost confidence he had acquired at another. Walpole assured the House that he could carry his "supposition" a great deal further, but that he would forbear; and turning round to the Opposition, he asked them how they liked the picture?*

The portrait was somewhat coarsely drawn, but the colours were laid on with a bold hand. Such debating was no joke, and the young Whigs in opposition became greatly alarmed. They declared they knew of no such person as the minister had alluded to; and even Pulteney blamed Sir William Windham for being too much under Bolingbroke's influence. Bolingbroke continued his contributions to the Craftsman; he went in the autumn again with Pope to take the Bath waters; he had Alderman John Barber, the ex-Mayor, again to dinner at Dawley. But Parliament had been dissolved; the general elections had taken place; and at the meeting of the new Parliament in the beginning of 1735 the minister, in spite of all invective and

* An abstract of Walpole's speech, from the Walpole Papers, is given by Coxe, i., 420.

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abuse, still stood his ground with a diminished but still an effective majority.

This was not the worst of Bolingbroke's mortifications. He was enraged to find that Pulteney and the young Whigs imputed their ill success at the elections and in the House of Commons to him: they scarcely concealed from him that it was his own unpopularity with the nation that injured them more than all his eloquence and experience did them service: that the imputation of being associated with him was found to be a most damaging scandal. Even Pulteney gently hinted that if he left the country altogether for a time it would be the better for the common cause, as his presence rendered it odious.*

Here was a pleasant predicament. To be told by the very men in whose cause he was contending that his presence did them an injury, was indeed a vexation. Bolingbroke characteristically at once resolved again to retire to France. His haughty spirit was deeply wounded; he determined to write in the cause of the Opposition no more. Other circumstances also had their share in driving him, as old age was approaching, again from his native land. Walpole's philippic against him had been taken up by all the ministerial writers, and menaces of something more than invectives in the House of Commons were spoken of as in preparation against Bolingbroke. Moderate as Walpole was, it was intimated that there might be a limit to his moderation: that he was not likely to allow himself to be always assailed as the worst of criminals by the man who owed it to him that he could live in

* "I hear he (Pulteney) has talked of something he expects from me; but I have desired he may be told that I will write nothing. He thought my very name and presence in England did hurt." Bolingbroke to Sir W. Windham, July 23, 1739. See also Marchmont Papers, ii. 350.

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England, and whose head, it was said, was still in his power. Though these threats might have no effect, still, was it wise in Bolingbroke to increase the number and inveteracy of his enemies? His private circumstances, too, were by no means comfortable. His father, old Lord St. John, not only still lived, but seemed not at all likely to die. Though now above fourscore years of age he was as hale and hearty as ever, and threatened to outlive his brilliant son. Bolingbroke had gone to more expense than he could afford at Dawley; there was no immediate prospect of his inheriting the family estate; pecuniary embarrassments stared him in the face.* Dignity, prudence, economy, all counselled retirement. Early in 1735, to the surprise of both friends and enemies who were unacquainted with the delicacy of his situation, he once more left England to take up his residence in France.

* See the letter of Pulteney to Swift, Nov. 22, 1735.

CHAPTER XV.

1735—1743.

IN FRANCE AGAIN.

In the May of 1735, Bolingbroke found himself once more removed from the great scene of English politics. His friend and neighbour, Lord Berkeley, accompanied him to Paris. To some of his acquaintances whom he left in England he had spoken of soon coming back. But there were few inducements for him again to return. Since he had settled in England ten years had gone, and during all that time his situation had remained without change or amelioration. Hope was at last leaving him. The conviction was forcing itself upon his mind that for him the political arena was finally closed, and that all he had to do was to leave it with dignity. According to his own illustration, he felt, on leaving England, like an actor who had trodden the stage too long, and who was every moment in danger of being hissed off.*

He remained some time in Paris, until in the autumn he had decided on his future abode. It was not until

* Bolingbroke to Sir W. Windham, Nov. 29, 1735.

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October that he had finally settled on a permanent residence at Chanteloup, in Touraine, where the Duc de Choiseul, five-and-thirty years afterwards, also retired, and where another ex-minister afterwards also took up his abode. The nobleman who had married Lady Bolingbroke's daughter held a high official post, which allowed Bolingbroke to have the use of the forests, and of the dogs and horses in the stables. Lady Bolingbroke lived with him the greater portion of the year, and spent the rest with her daughter at the Convent of Sens, in which her family always appear to have had great interest, of which, if we credit a letter of Pope,* her daughter was actually the abbess, and where Miss Black, the daughter of the Beautiful Circassian, was growing up and being educated as Bolingbroke's niece.

Some of these arrangements were made from economical considerations. When Bolingbroke entered into a calculation of his debts, estate, and expectations, his affairs seemed quite embarrassed; and he wrote to his intimate friend Windham that it was a question whether his wife should not retire to her convent altogether. He was obliged to borrow money at interest. He owed one creditor, his old friend the Marquis de Matignon, two thousand pounds, which was advanced him without security. He had not been long at Chanteloup when he was under the necessity of obtaining another loan of two thousand two hundred and fifty pounds; and he soon afterwards required two thousand pounds more. One step he found absolutely indispensable. It was necessary that he should sell Dawley. If old Lord St. John died, this estate would be useless as a place of residence; if he still lived on, the expense of keeping it up was likely to

* See the letter Pope wrote to Swift, May 17, 1739.

swallow up nearly all the receipts. Still, to part with Dawley cost Bolingbroke a struggle. He had found it a wilderness, he had made it a most elegant abode. The grounds were most tastefully laid out; nothing was wanting to give beauty, comfort, and luxury to this rural home. Dawley, however, was to be sold; and Sir William Windham and Lord Bathurst were earnestly requested to find a purchaser. Bolingbroke offered to part with the estate for twenty-six thousand pounds, then for twenty-five, and at last, his necessities admitting of no delay, for twenty-three thousand pounds, or twenty thousand pounds down, and a thousand a year until his own death, or the death of his father. His old secretary, John Brinsden, who had been doing some little business as a wine-merchant among Bolingbroke's great friends, and who still remained faithfully attached to him through all vicissitudes, acted as a kind of steward at Dawley. But Windham and Bathurst had the principal charge of the intended sale. They were soon in treaty with Judge Denton, who offered to purchase it; but the years 1736 and 1737 passed over, and the negotiation, notwithstanding Bolingbroke's anxious impatience, came to a stand.

His health, too, was anything but good. His gout had left him; but he could not sleep soundly, and his spirits were greatly depressed. He tried to make up for his want of rest in the night by sleeping in the day; and when he found himself restless after going to bed, he rose, dressed himself, walked about, or read and wrote until he found himself again able to sleep. He sought to remedy his mental depression by temperance and exercise; but walking merely for the sake of walking was always irksome to him; and as a substitute,

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on days when he was not hunting, he might frequently be seen in the forest with his gun in his hand, and his dogs by his side.

While hunting twice a week, and reading six hours a day, he also professed philosophy in a very sublime style. Never did his mind appear more active. Covering ream after ream of paper with his thoughts on history, politics, and philosophy, his letters to Sir William Windham, on all subjects, were also long, eloquent, and affectionate. Sir William's eldest son and heir, Charles Windham, was also just reaching manhood. Bolingbroke corresponded with the son as affectionately as with the father. Some of these letters, however, to Charles Windham are not in the very highest tone. To write to a young man, as his father's friend, about affairs of gallantry is not exactly what we might expect from the other compositions which were then flowing from Bolingbroke's pen; and such letters give some countenance to the assertion of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, that one of Bolingbroke's worst faults in his old age was his habit of speaking of his gallantries to the young men who sought his society, and boasting of his physical qualifications at a time when it was quite obvious all vigour had departed. Just after being settled at Chanteloup, and when he was beginning his Letters on History, we find him writing to Charles Windham in the following terms:

"Your letter, my dear friend, is this moment brought me; and you will receive one, with a large packet, from me to-morrow, or next day, by young Dupin, who is gone with his mamma to Paris. I want to know several circumstances about your present passion, which, I hope and believe, ... If it be for the Gossein, or the Dangeville, the only ladies of the

comedy I know by sight, you must tell me which. I want to know whether you are happy, and by what medium, whether by money, or stark love and kindness. With all ladies, with those particularly, good engineers proceed by assaults, not saps. . . . . Whilst I loved much, I never loved long, but was inconstant to them all, for the sake of all. . . . . Above all things, let her have no hopes of your sighing or . . . . This is very wholesome advice, and such as a man of your age may practise. I wish you grace to follow it. Adieu! I am interrupted, but will write to you soon again. Adieu, dearest Charles!" There are other letters in the same tone; but it is much to be regretted that they were not destroyed by the young man to whom they were addressed. Charles Windham sat in the House of Commons for several parliaments, and succeeded to his father's baronetcy, and afterwards to the earldom of Egremont. These letters were allowed to be printed by his son and successor.

It is a strange transition from such a correspondence to the Letters on History, the first of which bears the date of the same place, year, and month. Thus only, however, do we get a correct idea of Bolingbroke. It was at Chanteloup, in the month of November, in the year 1735, that he first took up his pen to instruct, by the Letters on History, another young Tory, Lord Cornbury, afterwards Lord Hyde, then the member for the University of Oxford, and the great-grandson of the celebrated Lord Clarendon. Lord Cornbury was an amiable and excellent young nobleman, of some literary pretensions, afterwards the author of a published comedy and several manuscript tragedies. Of him even Horace Walpole spoke with enthusiasm.

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The earlier portion of the Letters on History is, as Bolingbroke himself afterwards observed, somewhat elementary in its nature. He lays down the celebrated dictum, borrowed from Dionysius Halicarnassus, that history is philosophy, teaching by examples. Its object is to improve men in virtue and wisdom, to make them better men and better citizens. In this spirit Bolingbroke eloquently declaims. Every reader must be delighted with the author's vivacity and style, even when he may be inclined to question his conclusions. Of all Bolingbroke's writings, this work has been the most read. It exhibits in the highest degree both his strength and weakness. Some of the observations in the first letters remind us of the puerilities of the Reflections on Exile; in the attack on the Jewish history and scriptural chronology we behold a repetition of what he had written in the letter to Pouilly, and his fourth philosophical essay; and the three concluding Letters, which are evidently an elaborate defence of his conduct in making the peace of Europe, show all his grasp and power as a practical statesman. Though it is impossible to overrate the importance of history, many persons, however, will doubt whether the philosophy which it is to teach by example has much real influence on the passions of mankind. History may be contemplated both in the spirit of the cynic as well as in that of the optimist; and the conclusion derived from its lessons may be exactly opposite. Too often the examples of history seem but repetitions in one generation of the crimes and errors of another. It is with nations as with individuals. Seldom are kings, statesmen, or people restrained from bringing endless calamities on themselves, and those who come after them, by contemplating the follies and wicked-

nesses of those who have gone before them. Bolingbroke himself had been studying history diligently in his two years of retirement before he became Secretary of State; yet he had been hurried by his passions to commit mistakes, if not crimes, which he himself deeply regretted, and from the effects of which he was still suffering. Into his defence of his ministerial conduct in the last two letters it is not necessary here to enter, for enough has been said in former chapters on the Peace of Utrecht. Bolingbroke still evinces his old animosity to the House of Austria; but, as he is writing on the necessity of opposing the ambition of Louis XIV., in his remarks on the partition treaties, and on the war of the Grand Alliance, he certainly never shows in these letters on history, or, indeed, in any of his published writings, that devotion to a French alliance which has been absurdly represented as one of his characteristics as a statesman. On the contrary, both in this work, as in his conversations and writings in his old age, he regretted that the great fortified frontiers of France had not been sufficiently weakened by the very peace of Utrecht which he made, though again, as in his letter to Sir William Windham, he ascribed the omission to the violent conduct of his political adversaries.*

There are many errors in these Letters. Not even his philosophical treatises were more fiercely assailed; for this work on history offended both statesmen and divines: working politicians, Whig lords, and bishops, were all eager to attack the author who, in the same work both defended the Peace of Utrecht and assailed, sometimes with much coarseness and profaneness, the historical authenticity of the Old Testament. He wrote without books, and with the aid of a few notes only;

* See his Reflections on the State of the Nation, 1749.

he never confined himself to a definite plan. When he felt the impulse, he poured out his impressions with heat and rapidity, and seldom cared to read over and correct patiently what he thus hastily composed. Trusting so much to his memory, the powers of which were undoubtedly great, he could not avoid inaccuracies, some of which were very obvious. In the Reflections on Exile, for instance, he tells the anecdote of Agbarus, King of Edessa, on the authority of Procopius, while, in these Letters on History, the same anecdote is ascribed to Josephus. The story is not in Josephus, though it may be found in Procopius; but Bolingbroke was frequently misled by the French translations of original authors, which, as the very names he uses with the French terminations, frequently indicate. But the mental activity which such compositions as these Letters on History display, was certainly extraordinary. The earlier letters were sent over to England, and seen by Pope in the March of 1736, a very few months after Bolingbroke had settled at Chanteloup. Pope read them with wonder and admiration. He wrote to Swift: "I have lately seen some writings of Lord B.'s, since he went to France. Nothing can depress his genius; whatever befalls him he will still be the greatest man in the world, either in his own time or with posterity."*

In another short letter, which, with others, appears to have been addressed to their common friend, Lord Bathurst, Bolingbroke sketched a general plan of the History of Queen Anne's Reign, which he long meditated. There were to be two or more introductory books, giving the state of Europe when the Treaty of the Pyrenees was signed, a recapitulation of the

* Pope to Swift, March 25, 1736.

design of France in making that treaty, the position of the different powers at the time when the Revolution of 1688 broke out, and on the death of Charles II. of Spain. Bolingbroke's seventh and eighth Letters on History seem in some degree to carry out this idea, and were probably at first intended as the introduction to his greater work. At the accession of Queen Anne, he thought of entering on the full stream of his subject, and of relating all the vicissitudes in war and in negotiation of that great struggle for which the Spanish monarchy was the prize. He believed it as noble a theme as could possibly occupy the pen of the historian and the philosopher. This work, he said, was to be a votive draught of great transactions, consecrated and hung up in the temple of Truth. For some years it was frequently in his mind. He wrote to Windham, requesting him to gather correct accounts of the revenue and national debt at the Revolution, the reign of William, and at the Peace of Utrecht, and, in asking him to apply to the old Duchess of Marlborough for papers, alluded to his intention of defending the Duke's conduct in the expedition to the Moselle, in 1705, and his inactivity in 1707, both of which had been censured. The application to the Duchess of Marlborough was actually made by Lord Carteret. She promised compliance; but did nothing more. It is probable that she distrusted Bolingbroke and the use he might make of any materials she could supply. It is certain that her husband's glorious campaigns had quite a secondary importance in her mind to her own conduct as the mistress of the royal wardrobe, and the squabbles between herself, Queen Anne, and Mrs. Masham.* The

* See the Conduct of the Duchess of Marlborough, *passim*.

old dowager Duchess was a patriot. She was ardent in her opposition to the Walpole administration, was buying estate upon estate on the clearest arithmetical calculations, offering to lend money on good security and good interest, thinking of the jewels she had given to her favourite grandchildren, and which, on their untimely deaths, her greatest anxiety was to reclaim, defying the court in asserting her privileges as the Ranger of Windsor Park, finding this life by no means an enviable one, even for the richest dowager duchess of the time, and speculating, in a state of great bewilderment, on that other life, which, with its rewards and punishments, she had heard, was yet to come. Bolingbroke received no papers from the Duchess of Marlborough; but they were not, in their closing years, on unfriendly terms. They were both at war with the world as it was, and this common hostility became between them a bond of sympathy and alliance.*

While waiting for papers, and meditating on his great design, Bolingbroke still continued writing and moralizing. He addressed other letters to Lord Bathurst, the second being on the True Use of Retirement and Study. It was undoubtedly true, as Bolingbroke represents, that a love of knowledge and books, in one form or another, had always been characteristic of him, even amid the struggles, business, and pleasures of his younger days. Whether, however, the best way to employ the leisure of old age was to examine all opinions, and reject everything as false that did not seem true to each person's own reason, which, he affirms, ought to be each person's oracle, may admit of doubt. Through all the maxims he here enun-

* See Letter to Sir William Windham, Jan. 5, 1736, and March 16, 1738; also the Marchmont Papers, ii., 334.

ciates, and which he appears to have thought so edifying and admirable, we trace very distinctly the sceptical spirit with which he had become thoroughly imbued. In fact, this letter is fuller of what may be called his philosophy, than any of his writings which are not avowedly philosophical. He seems never to have comprehended the value of a prejudice as a prejudice. According to him, we ought always to be unbelieving, and, in religion, government, and philosophy, to distrust everything that is established. Instead of being a sublime, this is perhaps a very melancholy occupation; and no really wise man will assume that all the rest of mankind but himself are fools. Surely, even on Bolingbroke's own conclusion, that "whatever is, is right," might have taught him that there must be something right in the prejudices, the convictions, and the aspirations of the multitude.

In the multitude, however, he was no believer. Quitting the lofty philosophical subjects, which he had discussed in his letter on the True Use of Retirement and Study, in his next epistle, afterwards addressed to Lyttelton, he entirely changed his theme, and again descended into the arena of politics. His subject was the Spirit of Patriotism. In the first pages he laid it down as an unanswerable proposition, that in every age there were a few great men who engrossed nearly all the reason of their species; that, though the race of man was very low in the intellectual scale, yet there were still a few human beings on whom a larger share of what Bolingbroke calls the ethereal spirit had been bestowed; that these select individuals were born to think and to rule, and that all other people were bound to eat, to drudge, and to obey. After having established, in a manner quite satisfactory to his own mind, this peculiar

kind of hero worship, he then reviews the position of the two great English parties; shows himself thoroughly disgusted with both; and admits that his attempts to form a coalition between them, in opposition to Walpole, who is called a farmer of royal authority, had been disappointed by pusillanimity disguised as moderation, in some men, and by sloth, disguised as philosophy, in others. The review gives him little pleasure. He declares that he expects nothing good either from Whigs or Tories; characterizes their struggles at the time when the Protestant succession was supposed to be in danger, as a mere dispute between Bigendians and Littleendians; and tells his correspondent that his only hope is in him, and a few more of the young men who still refused to bow the knee to Baal. He then breaks out into a fine dissertation on oratory, and the two great orators of antiquity, Demosthenes and Cicero. His brilliant pages on this subject, of which he was himself so complete a master, can scarcely be read without admiration and pleasure. He concludes by affirming that an opposition can only be successfully conducted with the same preparation and industry as an administration; that it was absolutely necessary to act on a definite plan; and that every Member of Parliament ought to consider himself as one of a perpetual standing council to promote good government, and to oppose bad ministers.

Bolingbroke was, in his correspondence with Windham during the same period, expressing with almost equal eloquence similar sentiments. To him England appeared in the most desperate condition. He was dissatisfied with nearly everything and everybody but himself, Windham, Bathurst, and two or three very young men. The quarrels between George II. and the Prince of Wales,

however, became public in 1737, and afforded Bolingbroke another topic for commentary and reflection in his letters to Windham. He praised the conduct of the Prince on the question proposed by Pulteney, to settle on him a hundred thousand a year; and, in fact, this extraordinary application has been represented as according to Bolingbroke's own advice: but he disapproved of the conduct of both parties when the Princess was removed, during the pangs of her confinement, from the palace of Hampton Court to St. James's, to the great scandal of the London world. "I am at a loss," he wrote, "to find the plausibility or the popularity of the present occasion of rupture. He hurries his wife from court, when she is on the point of being delivered of her first child. His father swells, struts, and storms. He confesses his rashness, and asks pardon in terms of one who owns himself in the wrong. Besides that all this appears to me boyish, it is purely domestic; and there is nothing, as far as I can discern, to interest the public in the cause of his royal highness."* The unexpected death of Queen Caroline, in December, had also an extraordinary effect on Bolingbroke. George II. was getting old, and had recently been very ill; his Queen was dead; might not the reign of Frederick, Prince of Wales, be soon at hand? The ambitious statesman was once more planning and scheming. Might he not yet be Frederick's minister, and return on Walpole all that he had suffered? There was intoxication in the very idea. After all, and at the close of his life, might not Bolingbroke be as great and powerful in court and parliament as Mr. Secretary St. John had been in his younger days?

While nursing these hopes at the beginning of the

* Letter to Sir W. Windham, Oct. 13, 1737.

year 1738, his private circumstances were more embarrassing than ever. Dawley still remained unsold; his creditors were pressing; and old Lord St. John would not die. Bolingbroke's letters to Sir William Windham, to hasten the sale of Dawley, almost at any sacrifice, became more urgent; and at length he determined himself to cross over to England, and finish the sale without delay.*

He arrived in England at the end of June. He soon effected his immediate object by selling Dawley, and paying off some of his heavy debts. He spent some time with Pope at Twickenham; and from the poet's villa the two friends wrote the last of their joint letters to Swift, whose memory was nearly gone, and who, with his fits of giddiness and deafness every day becoming worse, was sinking into a state of imbecility which was only to terminate in raging lunacy. Bolingbroke himself was in very good health, though much fatter than he had been when he went to France, and his spirits, as he conversed with his old associates, seemed very high. His intention of writing his great work on the Reign of Queen Anne was generally talked about; and his old political allies expected the greatest things from his retirement.†

But Bolingbroke himself affected, during this visit to England, a satisfaction he was far from feeling. His quarrel with the Opposition still continued, and neither the Whigs nor Tories who composed it were willing to follow his counsels. Sir William Windham, indeed, was docile enough; but there was another Tory leader, the eccentric Shippen, who was by no means inclined to

* See Bolingbroke to Sir W. Windham.

† See Alderman Barber to Swift, July 2, 1738; Richardson to Swift, July 25, 1738; and Swift to Pope and Bolingbroke, Aug. 8, 1738.

relinquish Toryism under the advice of Bolingbroke; and Shippen's influence was great among all the country gentlemen who still inclined to Jacobitism. As the Tory portion of the Opposition would not give up Toryism, so the powerful Whig section, under the leadership of Pulteney, would not abandon their Whiggism. Pulteney, indeed, distinctly avowed that his object was to purify Whiggism, to act on Whig principles, and to strengthen the Whig party. Neither Tories nor Whigs would believe, as Bolingbroke told them, that these party distinctions had ceased; and the nearer the prospect appeared of driving Walpole from office, the more they perversely refused to unite. Again Bolingbroke found himself one too many; and again Pulteney intimated to him as delicately as possible that his presence did the Opposition an injury, and only assisted the minister.*

Bolingbroke's only hope was in Frederick, Prince of Wales. After being obliged to quit St. James's Palace, the Prince and his household had taken up their residence at Norfolk House, in St. James's Square, which, in fact, became the head-quarters of the Opposition. Thither came George Lyttelton, who had two years before been appointed the Prince's secretary; the brilliant and aspiring William Pitt, whose maiden speech had been made on the congratulatory address to the Prince of Wales on his marriage; the young Lord Polwarth, son of the second Earl of Marchmont, with whom Bolingbroke was entering into the closest intimacy; the accomplished Chesterfield; and Pulteney, the acknowledged chief of the Whig Opposition in the House of Commons.

* See Bolingbroke's letter to Sir W. Windham, July 23, 1739, and the Marchmont Papers, ii., 179.

The Prince had been years before charmed with Bolingbroke's manners and conversation. Treated, as the veteran statesman was, so coldly by Pulteney, Carteret, and others, who distinctly avowed that, if they acquired power, they would, in opposition to his counsels, pursue a Whig system, Bolingbroke was naturally anxious, before again returning to France, to do something on his own account. Hence he wrote The Patriot King, of which the object, of course, was to ingratiate himself thoroughly with the Prince of Wales.

The Patriot King was therefore, with the Letter on Patriotism, appropriately addressed to the Prince's secretary, Lyttelton, and was at first entitled The Patriot Prince. The Letter to Sir William Windham is frequently careless in style; the Reflections on Exile can scarcely be considered more than a rhetorical exercise; the contributions to the Craftsman were evidently written with the utmost rapidity, to serve the purpose of the day; and even the philosophical essays do not always appear to be the result of profound thought and studious investigation. Being intended, however, as a piece of elegant flattery, to establish himself thoroughly in the favour of him whom Bolingbroke expected soon to be King of England, the Patriot King bears indications of great care, and perhaps affords the best specimen of the author's style. "Until I had read that work," said Chesterfield, "I did not know the extent and power of the English language." The sceptical spirit, however, which Bolihgbroke had spent many years in nursing, now occupied his whole being, and possessed him at last to an extreme little short of fanaticism. Even at the beginning of this treatise, intended for the hands of royalty, in the

first paragraph after the introduction, he observes: "In this case, as in all those of great concernment, the shortest and the surest method of arriving at real knowledge is to unlearn the lessons we have been taught, to remount to first principles, and take nobody's word about them; for it is about them that almost all the juggling and legerdemain employed by men whose trade it is to deceive, are set to work." Churchmen and sovereigns, uniting together to impose a kind of divine right upon a silly world, are spoken of with the utmost scorn. He confesses that his ideas may be considered very antimonarchical; and therefore proceeds, according to the principles of his philosophy, to establish another kind of divine right, depending on the law of reason. Kings were made for kingdoms, not kingdoms for kings. As a monarchy can be shown by reason to be the best form of government, so a limited monarchy is the best of all monarchies. God himself, Bolingbroke affirms, always bordering on profaneness, is a kind of limited monarch. But the blessings of a limited monarchy can only be thoroughly enjoyed under the rule of a patriot king. To this patriot king, which is, indeed, purely a creation of the author's imagination, though it is understood by implication to be Frederick Prince of Wales, Bolingbroke ascribes a power far beyond any ever imputed by the most extreme worshipper of divine right to the sovereign authority. A patriot king had but to will to be obeyed. The moment he ascended the throne, by the mere effort of his volition, and the force of his good intentions, faction would cease, corruption no longer be needed as an expedient of government, and the very vices of former reigns act only as foils to his glory. Bolingbroke admits that a patriot king is in himself a sort of standing miracle;

and the effects he supposes such a character to produce are certainly miraculous.

There seems nothing of the practical statesman in this extraordinary scheme. Goldsmith called Bolingbroke's dream of a patriot king, which had its attractions for literary men, a fine idea; and a fine idea it is, but nothing more. Plato in his Republic, More in his Utopia, Harrington in his Oceana, never imagined anything more extravagantly visionary and unreal. In a work intended to instruct a future king of England, scarcely anything is said of the British constitution, or even of the existence of Parliament. How a patriot king was to govern without a parliamentary majority, and how he was always to see the best interests of his people more clearly than the wisest of his subjects, Bolingbroke never condescends to explain. He would himself have readily acknowledged that Queen Anne was a patriot sovereign in the last years of her reign; and yet he found that, in making the peace of Utrecht, and carrying on her government in defiance of the Whigs, there were many difficulties. George III., who read The Patriot King, and sought to carry the theory into practice, was certainly a patriot; and yet the worst king that ever ruled in England never did more mischief than this sovereign's narrow-minded patriotism at the period of the American war, and the struggle for the repeal of the Roman Catholic disabilities. Kings and princes are but men; and men, whether patriotic or otherwise, are very fallible beings. Bolingbroke only thought of his own particular circumstances and situation. Himself disliking all parties, he wished Prince Frederick to disregard all parties; and opposed as he was to nearly all the public men, either in office or opposition, he advised the Prince to act independently of them all. There are

but two practical notions hinted at throughout the book; and these must be taken for what they are worth. A patriot king was to have no standing army; but he was to apply the money for maintaining a great body of troops to increase the number of marines, and to keep thirty thousand sailors always ready for the royal navy. Writing, too, of the wretched education given to most princes, Bolingbroke hints that Parliament would almost be justified in looking to the education of the royal family. If anything could excuse this interference, it would be the manner in which George III. was brought up by the Princess of Wales and Lord Bute, who were such admirers of The Patriot King. Never was the education of a great sovereign more shamefully and criminally neglected. George III. was taught but to have one idea, which was taken from Bolingbroke's book, because it coincided with the prejudices and interests of his mother and tutor; and this idea being once rooted in a mind never susceptible of new impressions, brought endless calamities upon his people.

When Bolingbroke showed this work to Lyttelton he expressed his surprise at what was written about parties, and hinted that the sentiments needed a more particular application. This induced Bolingbroke to give, in a separate paper, a brief delineation of the State of Parties at the Accession of George I., which follows The Patriot King in his collected works. Here once more we have all Toryism distinctly repudiated; and in the first paragraph he gave expression to his abiding and final sentiment. "I know," he wrote, "all parties too well to esteem any." He denied that there was any formed design in the last year of Queen Anne's reign to set aside the succession in the House of Ha-

nover, showed that his animosity to his former colleague, the Earl of Oxford, who had been fifteen years in his grave, had in no respect abated by time, bitterly regretted that George I. had at his accession, by throwing himself entirely into the hands of the Whigs, driven the Tories into rebellion, and in the spirit of his recent treatise hoped for a national union, independent of parties, as soon as patriotism should fill the throne, and faction be banished from the government.

The introduction to The Patriot King bears the date of December 1738. When Bolingbroke had come over in the preceding June he had spoken of going back in a month or two to his forest. The spring of 1739 had, however, returned before he again left England. He had found himself unable to settle all his affairs to his satisfaction; and perhaps he wished to see the result of the great debates on the convention with Spain, which threatened to destroy the Walpole administration. The ear of Captain Jenkins had set the nation in a flame. Nothing would satisfy the people and the Opposition but a Spanish war; and to this desire the minister was himself at last about to yield. The approval of the convention with Spain was only carried in March by a small majority. It was evident that stirring times were approaching; and Bolingbroke could not but watch intently the progress of affairs, though he was himself still regarded as an intruder, and his presence neither asked nor desired by the Government nor the Opposition.

Most of his time was still spent with Pope at Twickenham. They had read and criticised together Aaron Hill's tragedy of Cæsar, which they both praised much too highly; and, on the usual difficulties occurring about bringing it on the stage, early in 1739, Boling-

broke drew a parallel between Hill's poetical situation, and his own political position. Fortune, he said, treated them both alike. "The stage," wrote Pope to Hill, "is as ungrateful to you as his country to Lord Bolingbroke: you are both sure of posterity, and may say, in the meantime, with Scipio, 'Ingrata patria, ne ossa quidem habeas!'"*

Tearing himself away from the political scene, Bolingbroke was in May once more in France. He occupied a residence, which he rented of a widow under a new arrangement. The negotiation gave him much trouble, and it was not until July that he could call the house his home. He communicated the result to Sir William Windham. "My lease," Bolingbroke wrote, "is for the life of a widow or the term of her widowhood. She will not marry, I think, because she would lose by it the best part of a small revenue; and though she be younger than I am, she is old enough not to be courted for her beauty."† His address he altered from Chanteloup to Argeville. He had still, however, all the advantages of the neighbourhood.

During the autumn and winter of 1739, and the spring of 1740, he corresponded frequently with Sir William Windham, and the young Lord Polwarth, who, on the death of his father, in January, 1740, became the third Earl of Marchmont. In these letters Bolingbroke's dissatisfaction with all parties, and particularly with both the leading members of the Whig opposition and the Jacobites, was still very strongly expressed. After the convention with Spain had been virtually approved, though by a small majority, the Opposition

* Pope to Aaron Hill, February 12, 1739.

† Bolingbroke to Sir W. Windham, July 23, 1739.

had seceded in a body from the House of Commons. Sir W. Windham's speech, in bidding farewell to this scene of debate, was very eloquent, and Bolingbroke, as usual, had the credit of Sir William's oratorical effort. The secession, however, did Walpole no injury. It gave him the opportunity of passing easily some useful measures; and when Parliament was prorogued the step which the Opposition had taken seemed very questionable to the public out of doors. Pulteney hinted to Lord Polwarth his desire that Bolingbroke should write something on the question. For Pulteney, however, Bolingbroke had determined to write nothing more. When the request was communicated to him, Bolingbroke replied to Polwarth, "I am hurt, and your lordship will acknowledge that I have some reason to be so, when I hear that the same persons as think my name, and much more my presence in Britain, whenever I am there, does them mischief, should express any expectation of that kind you mention from me. They treat me a little too lightly." For Lord Polwarth's own satisfaction, however, Bolingbroke did sketch out a paper in defence of the secession. No sooner, however, was it sent over than it was found practically useless, for the secession came to an end. War was declared against Spain in October of 1739, Parliament was summoned to meet in November, and the Opposition again appeared in their places.

From his retreat in France, Bolingbroke surveyed the agitating scene in England like a being from another world. His day of action was over. He could but look on and communicate his thoughts to the two friends by whom his opinions were still received with respect. His reflections were very melancholy. He was certain that Walpole even, in declaring war, was

betraying his country to Spain, and that England was almost hopelessly undone. Nothing but a national union of men of all parties could afford any prospect of saving the state; and this union was perversely resisted by the Whigs, who had plainly told Bolingbroke that they did not want their party destroyed, and by the perverse Jacobites, who, he said, were born to be hewers of wood and drawers of water to the rest of their countrymen. He still, in his private letters, declaimed on the evils of parties, and recapitulated at great length to Lord Polwarth all the efforts he had made for so many years to establish an opposition on another principle of combination than that of Whig or Tory. These endeavours, however, had been unavailing. The nation was all but abandoned to perdition. With the exception of Windham and Polwarth, no English politicians would act on the principle Bolingbroke had laid down. It was useless for him to struggle any longer. He had preached eloquently, but in vain, to a foolish, wicked, and thoughtless generation, only deserving such a minister as Walpole to rule over it as a kind of grand vizier or mayor of the palace. Such were the tenor of Bolingbroke's reflections as the year 1739 closed.*

In the January of 1740, Lord Polwarth was removed from the House of Commons, and even from the political scene, by the death of his father, the second Earl of Marchmont. In becoming a Scottish peer, as the third Earl of Marchmont, without a seat as one of the elected peers in the House of Lords, Bolingbroke's young favourite found himself almost in the same condition as his great instructor. They could do little but complain

* See Bolingbroke's letters to Sir W. Windham, of July 23, Nov. 1 and 18, 1739, and New Year's Day, 1740; and the letters to Lord Polwarth of July 22, Oct. 15, 1739, and New Year's Day, 1740.

to each other. Bolingbroke still meditated a history of Queen Anne's reign, and set about revising his philosophical essays. He shot and hunted as usual in the forest. His ordinary pursuits were, however, interrupted by a severe attack of bilious fever. For some days he was confined to his bed, and was only slowly recovering when he received a visit from Sir William Windham, Lord Marchmont, and another friend. He observed with pain that Windham's health was much broken. Sir William soon afterwards died. The loss of this old friend affected Bolingbroke more than any affliction he had ever sustained.

He wrote and received many letters of condolence. Pope, Lyttelton, and Marchmont all sent him very interesting and curious epistles for the insight they gave to the characters of the writers and to the position Bolingbroke held as their friend and political adviser. A genuine letter from Pope to Bolingbroke is itself a curiosity, for it is strange how few of such compositions we possess. This letter, a manuscript copy of which I have found in the library of the British Museum, is one of the most characteristic of Pope's epistles. It exhibits plainly the relation in which Pope and Bolingbroke stood towards each other. On September the 3rd, 1740, Pope then was, as usual, prostrate in the dust before the image of Bolingbroke, and wrote as follows:

"My dear Lord,

"Your every word is kind to me, and all the openings of your mind enviable. Your communicating any of your sentiments both make me a happier and a better man. There is so true a friend of all virtue, public and social, within you, I mean so right a sense

of things as we stand related to each other by the laws of God, and indebted to each other in conforming to those laws, that I hope no particular calamity can swallow up your care and concern for the general. Indeed, the loss of Sir W. Windham might have been felt by you more deeply as a particular than by any other; and I see nothing so manly, nothing so edifying, as your not deserting the common cause of your country at this juncture. No man has less obligation to her, no man feels a stronger than yourself. Your resolution to return to her, if she wants to be saved, and will or can be saved, is by far a more dignified one than any of her sons can pretend. And every one who knows either her condition or your ability (and, more than your ability, our safety, duty, and honour), must rest his chief hope upon it. Lord Marchmont does so as the ultimate resource, as he holds no language but that of his heart, and unless you animate him to act by that hope, will drop all thought of action. No other has the least influence, and all his friends' entreaties have been urged in vain to draw him from Scotland for this winter to come. Lord Chesterfield despairs as much as ourselves to act. He and Lyttelton think alike, and act the best part that ever was acted in their conduct, and counsel to their master. But still I will say, be others at home as they will, they cannot be as generous as you. They must, if good counsel prevail, reap benefits you will not reap, and may expect to see these fruits of which you can see the blossom only. The monk and ascetic tell us, we are not attained to perfection till we serve God for *his* sake only, *not our own*, not even for the hope of heaven. You really would serve *men* in this manner, and many whom you have no obligation to love, and who have done their best to ruin you, all in

their turns. It may therefore be called by its true name, not so much love to your country as to your God. It is not patriotism but downright piety, and instead of celebrating you as a poet should, I would (if I were Pope) canonize you, whatever all the advocates for the devil could say to the contrary.

"But I hope the time for that is not near; that your reward in the next life (of which I am satisfied) might be the sole motive of such a conduct, will be different at least during my own time. There is nothing at present I desire so much to know as that your bilious fever is quite removed; the repeated attacks of which have given me an alarm greater, I assure you, than almost any worldly event could give me, who daily find myself passing into a state of indifference, out of which I would take those whom Providence seems by their talents to ordain to do more good to mankind. I have a more particular interest, too, in your life than any other at present, as a private man; for the greatest vanity I have is to see finished that noble work, which you address to me, and where my verses interspersed here and there will have the same honour done them as those of Ennius in the philosophical writings of Tully.

"Next to patching up my constitution, my great business has been to patch up a grotto (the same you have so often sat in the sunny part of, under my house) with all the varieties of nature underground, spars, minerals, and marbles. I hope yet to live to philoso phize with you in this museum, which is now a study for virtuosi and a scene for contemplation. At least I am resolved to have it remembered that you was there, as you will see from the verses I dare to set over it.

"Adieu! may you and yours be happy:

"Then who shall stop, &c." (as in the printed copy).

"Aweful as Philo's grove or Numa's grot,
Where nobly pensive St. John sat and thought:
Here patriot sighs from Windham's bosom stole,
And shot the generous flame through Marchmont's soul,
Let such, such only, &c." *

On perusing this specimen of the correspondence between Pope and Bolingbroke, every reader may ask, How is it that so few of these letters are to be found? Besides the one here now printed, scarcely another between Pope and Bolingbroke has come to light. In the voluminous editions of Pope's published correspondence there is not a single letter from him to Bolingbroke, or from Bolingbroke to him. That, however, they wrote to each other regularly can be shown from many allusions in other epistles. What, then, has become of all their letters? Pope evidently intended his for publication: in the letter just given, there is a care and affectation, showing that the poet was writing to posterity as much as to Bolingbroke. As Bolingbroke had afterwards the charge of Pope's manuscripts, the conclusion is forced upon us, that, enraged with what he regarded as the poet's treachery, he deliberately destroyed all the letters which passed between them in order that no trace of their long and intimate correspondence should remain.

The letter from Lyttelton to Bolingbroke which I have found in the same collection, anticipates very correctly all the loss which Sir William Windham's death had entailed upon the Opposition. It was found impossible to keep the Tories in hand, and during the very

* This interesting letter I have given exactly as it remains in the manuscript copy: Additional MSS. 4291. The verses were afterwards slightly altered.

next session, on Sandys' motion for Walpole's removal, a considerable body of them under Shippen left the house without voting at all, and others, like Bolingbroke's virtuous friend Lord Cornbury, actually supported the minister. The earnest and conscientious, though somewhat dreamy and solemn Mr. Lyttelton was one of those whom Walpole called the Boys; but he clearly defines the position Sir W. Windham had long held, and, though he wrote as an orator, his views, as expressed in this letter, are practical and sagacious. "It is," wrote Lyttelton to Bolingbroke, "my lord, no small addition to the grief I feel for the loss of Sir W. Windham, that I know it must be an inconsolable one to your lordship; and that it comes upon you when your spirit has been weakened by a great fit of illness, as I hear from Mr. Pope, whom I saw yesterday atmy return out of Worcestershire. Indeed, you will have need of all your philosophy to support such a blow, which falls as heavily upon the public as it does upon you; so that you have the affliction of your country to bear as well as your own; nor do I see any comfort to either but resignation to Providence, for the loss is irreparable.

"Besides his abilities and integrity, there were some peculiar circumstances in Sir W. Windham's situation which made him of the utmost importance to his country in the present conjuncture. He was the centre of union to the best men of all parties. His credit in Parliament was the only check to the corrupt part of the Whig opposition, and his influence with the Tories the only means of keeping that party in any system of rational measures. Now he is gone, those who look towards the court will pursue their schemes with little or no difficulty, without any regard to the coalition or

to any national reformation of Government, but rather to build a new fabric on Sir Robert's [weak] and rotten foundation; and it is much to be feared that resentment, despair, and their inability of conducting themselves, may drive the Tories back into their old prejudices, heat, and extravagance. That this is too likely to happen, I dare say your lordship feels and laments. What alone could prevent it is, I doubt, not likely to happen, viz., that the Prince of Wales should have credit enough with the best part of the Tories—with that part, I mean, which was under the influence of Sir W. W.—to keep them united under him, with the uncorrupt part of the Whigs; and that the views of this coalition should be steadily, regularly, and warmly pursued.

"This, my lord, might yet preserve us from impending destruction. But even if with the mediation of Sir W. W. [this] could not be effected, if even with him at our head we were inactive, careless, and ready to break asunder every day: what hope is there now of greater activity, greater confidence or union in our proceedings? Who shall take the lead in the House of Commons? Who has authority enough there to defeat the perfidy of some, and to spirit the languor of others; to direct our measures, and to give them weight, order, and dignity? To say the truth, after losing in one year, Lord Polwarth and Sir W. Windham, to hope to resist the fall of the nation is a sort of presumption. But though to hope may be folly, to contend, I am sure, is a duty; and upon that principle some, I suppose, will act under any discouragement. From the despondency I feel about the public, my head is, I think, with the sentiments of private affection and concern for my friends. This makes me very impatient to hear from your lordship, that I may be assured of your health,

1740.

which I am afraid may be too much affected by this unhappy event; and it will be the greatest consolation to me under the loss of a friend I shall always regret, to find that you continue your kindness to

"My lord,

"Your lordship's most obliged humble servant,

"G. Lyttelton.

"I put this into the hands of Mr. Brinsden till he can find a safe opportunity of conveying it to you."*

Lord Marchmont, the Lord Polwarth of the last year, followed on the same mournful subject. Bolingbroke wrote to him in the most affectionate terms immediately after hearing of the death of their common friend. He classed them both together as lost to public life; for Marchmont by his Scottish peerage was as hopelessly shut out from the House of Commons, and from taking part in the great impending struggle against Walpole, as Windham was by the grave. "What a star has our minister!" exclaimed Bolingbroke in a letter to Pope, who afterwards quoted the expression in another letter to the young Earl. "Windham dead—Marchmont disabled! the loss of Marchmont and Windham to our country!" Nor was this merely friendly exaggeration. During the six years Lord Polwarth had sat in the House of Commons, he had risen rapidly to be an effective speaker, and had distinguished himself as one of the ablest of Walpole's assailants, Sir Robert himself ranking his efforts above those of Lyttelton or even Pitt. This Hugh, the third Earl of Marchmont, was undoubtedly a nobleman of many virtues and accomplishments: in the time of Pitt and Fox he still remained, at above eighty years of

* Additional MSS. No. 2, 4291.

age, the representative of a generation that had gone for ever, and after witnessing the fierce parliamentary battles against Walpole in 1741 and 1742, he lived to be a spectator of the struggle of the younger Pitt against the coalition of Fox and North in 1784, and even to behold the French Revolution, and the beginning of the great war in 1793. He was the grandson of that Sir Patrick Hume, who was afterwards by King William created the first Earl of Marchmont, and who shared the perils of the unfortunate Argyle's expedition in the reign of James II., and has been so frequently blamed for its failure. Between this Hugh, the third Earl, and his twin brother Alexander Hume Campbell, there was such a strong family likeness that even their acquaintances frequently mistook one for the other.

Marchmont had won Bolingbroke's heart by accepting his sentiments on the wickedness and folly of all parties. Bolingbroke assured him that he was to take Windham's place in his bosom, and be to him all that he had lost. The aging statesman needed some one to whom he could write and converse, on the past, the present, and the future. He chose the young Scottish earl, who looked up to him with great respect, and who, during the closing years of Bolingbroke's life, continued his most intimate and cherished friend. Bolingbroke's letters to Marchmont were frequently written in a very high style. He moralized, he bewailed the misfortunes of his country, and, as in his recent letters to Windham, adopted a tone of the most ardent and disinterested patriotism. The historical work which he had intended addressing to Windham was now to be addressed to Marchmont. "I hope," wrote Bolingbroke to him, after lamenting Windham's death, "you will see one day or other some essays, that

vindicate reason against philosophy, religion against divinity, and God against man; and I flatter myself that on all these subjects they will give you some satisfaction by what they contain, and more by what they suggest. The mention of these essays puts me in mind of some miscellaneous writings that I shall leave behind me, if I live a little longer, and enjoy a little health. The principal part of them will be historical, and these I intended to address to Windham: permit me to address the whole to you. I shall finish them up with more spirit, and with greater pleasure, when I think that, if they carry to posterity any memorials of my weakness, as an actor or a writer, they will carry thither a character of me, that I prefer to both, the character of Windham and Marchmont's friend."

The earl was highly flattered by the assurance that he stood so high in Bolingbroke's esteem. Replying to him from his family seat, Redbraes Castle, on the 24th of September, he said: "My lord, I have this minute received your letter, and by my brother's leaving this place to-morrow, I am inclined to return you the thanks of a most grateful and affectionate heart, for the pleasure which your goodness, and the instruction of your genius, communicate to me. My lord, it is beyond my power to express what I feel when I observe you take every occasion of gratifying me, by permitting me to have fresh marks of your affection. It is impossible, I think, even for your lordship to go beyond this of making me successor to Sir W. Windham. I have reaped the fruit of a long life after a short time of labour, in the acquisition of such friends. God long preserve you, my lord, that all comfort may not be taken away! I have just received a letter from Lord Chesterfield, pressing me to come to

town. I have told him that I could be of no use, I know I cannot; but they all deal in imagination, or without, as I see, one probable foundation to build their hopes upon. They have lost their generals, and they are pressing private men. They want advice, when they have no hand to execute nor head to conduct the operations. I have told my lord that I would, if possible, look on for a month, in obedience to him who is the only hope in this country; but excluded from the scene where the action must now lie, wherever I am, my lord, I hope to have the pleasure of frequent communication with you, and, by that means, the advantage of being directed by your judgment. My inclination leads me to turn from a scene where I can only refresh the memory of what is gone for ever. I know enough of people and things to expect no good, and to be sensible I can do none. I cannot act, and I have credit with none who do or can act, and this I think decides that point. Thus far, I can practise resignation, though I lament and repine at the blow which has reduced me to it. Your lordship is used to our fortunes, and have reasoned yourself into submission. But I have met them in the bloom of hopes, and my first trials are the great bitternesses of life. I have but one way to support them, and I may rejoice that it is open to me—the enjoyment of your friendship and those friendships I owe to you."*

Lord Marchmont wrote much more in the same strain. The correspondence between the young earl and the old statesman having been thus established after Windham's death, continued with scarcely any interruption. To Charles Windham, who had succeeded to his late

* This letter will not be found among the published Marchmont Papers. A copy of it is, with the others I have quoted, in the British Museum. Add. MSS. 4291.

father's estate and baronetcy, Bolingbroke also wrote at this season two or three letters of advice about the management of his affairs, and earnestly counselled him to practise that economy from the neglect of which Bolingbroke himself was still suffering. But Marchmont soon became his only regular correspondent. The struggle against Walpole in 1741, the conduct of the Tories, the general election, and Walpole's consequent defeat and resignation in the February of 1742, were subjects in which Bolingbroke still took the greatest interest, and on which he wrote to his friend eloquently and copiously. He related to him an interview he had in the autumn of 1739 with a distinguished member of the Opposition, who, in answer to Bolingbroke's remonstrances for not acting steadily against Walpole, solemnly replied that he did not consider the English Constitution worth preserving, and that on the whole he decidedly preferred the scheme in Harrington's Oceana. Bolingbroke still meditated his historical work, which, however, began to be more limited in design, and to be rather memorials for history than a general history, in consequence, as he observed, from not receiving all the materials he expected; and he requested Lord Marchmont, as he had formerly done Windham, to make inquiries about the state of the revenue in the last year of Queen Anne's reign and the first of the accession of the House of Hanover. He admitted that the treaty of Utrecht had left too much power in the hands of the House of Bourbon; and on Torcy's Memoirs being shown to him in manuscript by the author, who had been, like himself, many years in retirement, he doubted the accuracy of the statement made on Mesnager's authority that he had objected to treat with France on the ground that there was an express law prohibiting the

English government from negotiating with any state harbouring the Pretender.

A change also soon occurred in Bolingbroke's private affairs. He learnt at Argeville, in the year 1741, that his father, old Lord St. John, was at last breaking, and that he might himself soon expect to become master of Battersea. He was visited by Chesterfield, who during the summer spent three days with him, and found him deep in metaphysics, refusing almost to talk on any other subject.* Still, Bolingbroke was prepared to leave his French hermitage, and cross over to England on the first summons. He was, however, by no means anxious to attend his father in his last hours. Between them for many years there scarcely seems to have been any communication or sympathy, as, indeed, under their circumstances, little kindly feeling was to be expected. Between a brilliant son who was above sixty years of age, with a broken constitution and indifferent circumstances, and a hale and hearty old gentleman who kept Bolingbroke out of the family estate, and at ninety years of age still persisted in living, and threatened to run a hard race even with his legal successor, the domestic relationship could not be very tender. The old gentleman threatened to live to the age of Methusaleh; and Bolingbroke, who was himself getting grey, and was both gouty and rheumatical, could not afford to wait. Old Lord St. John made a hard fight for it, but, tough as he was, he at last succumbed. He died in the April of 1742; and Bolingbroke's presence was required in England.

Here he remained, however, little more than two months. In succeeding to his father's estate he was still

* Chesterfield's Works, edited by Lord Stanhope, v. 443.

far from rich. His debts were heavy, and his means limited. He resolved to continue his residence in France. Independently of his straitened circumstances the political events of the spring and summer gave him little pleasure. After Walpole's fall Bolingbroke, with nearly all the rest of the world, had been dissatisfied with the compromise Pulteney and Carteret had been artfully induced to make with the subordinate members of the late government, and he had written strongly to Lord Marchmont lamenting the consequences he had always foreseen. He arrived in London just in time to witness the complete discomfiture of the patriots, the total shipwreck of Pulteney's reputation, and the miscarriage of all those prospects of union which Bolingbroke himself had so long striven to carry out. Seeing that he could do no good in England, where he was as much out of place as at any time during Walpole's government, Bolingbroke was anxious to be off again to France.

Bidding adieu to Pope and Lord Marchmont, he soon again crossed the Channel. The passage was tedious, and the vessel in which he sailed narrowly escaped capture by three Spanish privateers. In August he was once more settled at Argeville. He found, however, his hermitage not so quiet as he had expected; his house was full of visitors, thinking that he had come into a great fortune; and Bolingbroke, to pursue his studies free from interruption, fitted up a small pavilion in a garden belonging to the Abbey of Sens. There he had only means of accommodation for himself and three or four servants; and in this retreat he still hoped to draw up something historical, in order, as he said, that posterity should know he lived and died Lord Marchmont's friend.*

* See Bolingbroke's letters to Lord Marchmont, Aug. 2. and Oct. 30, 1742.

Lord Marchmont now inhabited Bolingbroke's house at Battersea. Bolingbroke himself continued in his foreign residence for some months. He still corresponded with Lord Marchmont, and though he spoke of England as despicable and despised, his interest in her affairs was not at all diminished. His disgust at the turn things had taken after Walpole's fall was intense; but he could scarcely complain of Pulteney, who had gone into obscurity and insignificance by being raised to the peerage as Earl of Bath, or of Carteret, who had always frankly told him he intended carrying on the old system. "The principles of the late Opposition," remarked Bolingbroke to his friend Marchmont, "were the principles of very few of the opposers; and your lordship and I, and some few, very few, besides, were the bubbles of men whose advantage lies in having worse hearts; for I am not humble enough to allow them better heads."

At the beginning of 1743 Bolingbroke was again in England. He stayed some days at Battersea, dined frequently with Lord Chesterfield, with whom he was to the last on friendly terms, met Pope, Bathurst, and Marchmont with the old cordiality, and again entered into all the schemes of the Opposition. No disappointment could extinguish his political ardour. Like the old war-horse, he was always strong, and his spirits excited at the prospect of the coming battle.

Much of the time that was not given to politics was spent with Pope. Pope had two new admirers. The one was William Murray, afterwards the celebrated Lord Mansfield, who, during Bolingbroke's last absence in France, had been appointed solicitor-general, and the other Warburton, who had won the poet's gratitude and admiration by his defence of the Essay on Man from the attacks of Crousaz. Bolingbroke had known Murray

some years, they agreed in their dislike of parties, and Murray's recent appointment to the solicitor-generalship had been hailed by Bolingbroke as a sign that good and able men might rise independent of such connections. Pope introduced Warburton to Bolingbroke, hoping that two such great and learned persons would feel for each other that sincere admiration he felt for them both. Never was expectation more completely deceived. Even before the two men met, the seeds of their future enmity had been sown. Pope had some time before innocently shown Warburton the Letters on the Study of History, which had been privately printed in two small volumes. The dissertation on Jewish History and Ancient Chronology, Warburton without, as he declared, knowing who the author was at the time, considered commonplace, second-hand, and disingenuous. Pope, all zeal for his friend, asked Warburton to state his objections in writing to this portion of the work. Warburton sat down at once in the library at Twickenham and wrote on several sheets of paper a series of remarks in answer to Bolingbroke's observations. When they were communicated by Pope to Bolingbroke, they excited his strongest indignation; and he considered that Pope had committed a breach of confidence in showing the work to Warburton at all. As we have seen, this chronological question was one on which Bolingbroke had formed very decided opinions, even when he first began his philosophical studies at La Source. To attack him on this ground was to attack him where he felt most deeply. He had also a very high estimation of his own writings; and Warburton's criticism seemed to him nothing but presumption. He wrote a warm defence of his dissertation, in which there was more heat than argument. Pope at last

introduced Warburton to Bolingbroke; Bolingbroke received him with politeness; but it required an effort to conceal his antipathy. How, indeed, could Pope have expected Bolingbroke to like Warburton? The author of the Divine Legation was the embodiment of all that Bolingbroke detested in divines; and his bold, paradoxical, learned, and elaborate work must have appeared to Bolingbroke one of those compilations of artificial theology which he considered it his especial mission to destroy. The two men stood in natural antagonism. Bolingbroke's hatred was not softened by the suspicion, that whatever might be his other qualifications, his learning on those theological questions on which he pronounced so decidedly, was not to be compared with that of this proud and scornful attorney's son, who was working his way up to the bench of bishops. Bolingbroke, too, was jealous of the ascendancy Warburton was acquiring over Pope, who, frightened at the imputations of irreligion which had been brought against the Essay on Man, regarded his champion as the ablest of critics, and the Divine Legation as the greatest of all works. Having himself been for so many years worshipped by Pope, Bolingbroke could not bear to see the poet transfer a portion of his idolatry to Warburton; and he very soon wrote of Warburton in the most contemptuous terms. In reviewing the Fourth Philosophical Essay addressed to Pope, he added some remarks on the difference between genuine Christianity and the artificial theology preached and written about by divines. Bolingbroke observed, with no very philosophical equanimity, "You have, I know, at your elbow a very foul-mouthed and a very trifling critic, who will endeavour to impose upon you on this occasion, as he did

on a former. He will tell you again that I contradict myself, and that by going about to destroy the authority of the fathers and the church which I reject, I go about to reject the authenticity of the gospels, which I admit. But if the dogmatical pedant should make this objection, be pleased to give him this answer, that I do, indeed, admit the gospel, not on the testimony of the Spirit, like Calvin, but on that of the fathers and doctors of the Church, who not only bear this testimony separately, but assembled in a council at Laodicea, rejecting many other gospels, made a canon of these: and yet that his objection is impertinent, since I may receive the gospels on the credit of these men, of whom I think very little better than I do of him, for authentic scriptures, just as well as he receives the books of the Old Testament, concerning which he has started so many idle paradoxes, for such, on the credit of the Jews, though he rejects their oral law, and the fabulous traditions of their rabbis." *

Bolingbroke continued in England during this visit until June. He might be considered to have two homes: part of the time he stayed in his own house, with Lord Marchmont, at Battersea, and the rest was spent, as usual, at Twickenham with Pope, whom he magnanimously forgave for showing his Letters on History to Warburton. He was anxious to bring about a coalition between the Opposition and the Pelhams. With Carteret he kept no terms, and eagerly counselled measures to drive him from the councils of George II. His private affairs continued in a very unsatisfactory condition; and they gave both himself and his friend

* The conclusion of Bolingbroke's Fourth Philosophical Essay; see also Warburton's review of Bolingbroke's philosophy for his account of their first acquaintanceship; and Pope's letters to Warburton *passim*.

William Chetwynd, of Stafford, much trouble. When he again left England, Bolingbroke's mind was, as usual, excited and distracted, full both of political affairs and of his own embarrassed circumstances. Bitterly did he continue to regret his neglect of economy during the years he spent at Dawley.*

His rheumatism was still troublesome, and to finish some doses of bark which he was taking, he stayed five days at Calais. He then went on to Paris, where he spent three more days, and at last set off for his hermitage at Argeville. The news of the battle of Dettingen, fought in some way by England under the leadership of his old friend Lord Stair, reached him as soon as he was settled, and he took the most lively interest in that conflict, which to us was both a victory and an escape. He wrote repeatedly to Lord Marchmont to get him some red Virginia acorns for a friend and neighbour, who was fond of planting, and informed him that he was learning in his solitude to play at backgammon. "I find," he said, "that the back game may be played often to advantage when the fore game is lost." He was also looking after Lord Gower's two sons, who were studying in France, and he had them with him on a visit at his house.

Bolingbroke had only been a month at Argeville once more, before he thought of leaving this foreign home, for what turned out to be the last time. All the bark he took did not remove his rheumatism; his gout was also painful; his wife, too, was not in good health; and the winter was coming on. He was advised by his physicians again to go to Aix-la-Chapelle, and try what bathing, sweating, drinking, and pumping would do. In August, with most of his baggage and house-

* Letter to Lord Marchmont, June 19, 1743.

hold, he set out by way of Brussels, determined to employ those remedies to the utmost. "I am lame," he wrote, "and my wife has lost the use almost entirely of one hand. We are going to the pool of Bethesda, and we shall soon see whether the angel will descend and stir the waters for us."*

Bolingbroke stayed at Aix-la-Chapelle throughout the month of September. He still corresponded with Lord Marchmont earnestly on both foreign and domestic affairs. He discussed the future probabilities of a coalition, Henry Pelham having on the death of Lord Wilmington become First Lord of the Treasury; whether Prince Charles had recrossed the Rhine; the ambition of the House of Bourbon; and the necessities of a peace to England. He spoke of leaving Aix-la-Chapelle again on the 7th of October, and of returning to Argeville. But he suddenly changed his mind, and about the middle of the month set out from Aix to England. One reason for his change of place was his desire to assist in bringing about his favourite scheme of a coalition; and another was the unsatisfactory condition of his private circumstances. After contributing to drive him from England for so many years, these embarrassments had at last their share in compelling him to return. "If I cannot," he observed, "have ease and stability in my retreat abroad, I had as good be at home, though it is one of the last places where I would be." Though he knew it not at the time, his ramblings were at an end. He was no longer to take up his residence on a foreign soil. That England in whose affairs, notwithstanding all his disappointments and declarations, he could not help feeling so strong an interest, was henceforth, during the few years that yet remained to him, to be his home.

* Letter to Lord Marchmont from Brussels, Aug. 25, 1743.

CHAPTER XVI.

1744—1751.

BATTERSEA.

Bolingbroke came over to England intending, as he said to Lord Marchmont, to live with him on the same brotherly terms as Windham had lived at Dawley. The winter of 1743, and the spring of 1744, were spent by Marchmont and Bolingbroke together in pleasant idleness; political affairs were not immediately pressing; and their only anxiety was about their common friend, Pope.

Pope's health had been gradually declining. He had recently been at Bath, but even as a sickly poet, could still dine gaily, taking garlic in sauces rather than in electuaries. After Bolingbroke returned to England, the poet was frequently brought down to Battersea, and as he became worse, nothing that Bolingbroke could do was omitted to render him the kindest attentions. He consulted physicians; he carried them to Twickenham; he was hours and days at Pope's bedside. On the Easter Monday of 1744, Pope wrote to his two friends, one of the last of his letters, inviting them to come to Twickenham together, to meet Murray, the

1744.

solicitor-general there, and to send Warburton, who was very desirous to wait upon them both, on to him in a chaise which had been left at Battersea. As the month of May came in, it became clearly evident that Pope had but a little while to live. Bolingbroke spent nearly all his time at Twickenham. One day Pope was on the terrace taking the air with Bolingbroke and Marchmont. Martha Blount came to the steps. Pope, according to Johnson, requested Bolingbroke to assist her up to him; but he only replied by crossing his legs, and ungallantly left the task to Marchmont. Bolingbroke, however, wept over his dying friend, passionately exclaiming, "Oh! great God, what is man!" When all hope in this world was over, the eminent surgeon, William Cheselden, remarked that the poet's friends must now look towards heaven. "Pshaw!" replied Bolingbroke, "we can only reason on the actual:" the actual in his philosophy always being just what he could grasp with his ten fingers. At the suggestion of Hooke, the historian of Rome, a Catholic priest was brought to the poet's bedside. When Bolingbroke heard of the circumstance he was highly indignant, and fell into a great passion. But some of the anecdotes of his conduct as Pope was dying, though minutely related, come from his enemies, and may be received with diffidence. Pope breathed his last on the thirtieth of May. Bolingbroke sobbed like a child; and repeatedly declared that the poet was one of the best and most generous of men.*

In a few days, however, Bolingbroke's language regarding his late friend began to change. To Warburton had been left a rich legacy in the property of all Pope's printed writings; to the care and judgment of Lord Bolingbroke, and after him to Lord Marchmont, were committed, with the authority to pre-

* See Spence's Anecdotes, Singer's edition, 320-22.

serve or destroy them, all the poet's manuscripts and unprinted papers. The old Dowager Duchess of Marlborough had of late years been on very friendly terms with Pope, and had given him a thousand pounds to destroy the character of Atossa, which had been handed about, and which she well knew was intended for herself. Though to the last high-spirited and brave, she really dreaded Pope's satire, and had done everything to make him her friend. On his death she inquired anxiously of Lord Marchmont what had become of the character of Atossa. Bolingbroke made some investigations on the subject, and the result may be given in his own words, addressed to Lord Marchmont. "Our friend Pope, it seems, corrected and prepared for the press, just before his death, an edition of the four epistles that follow the Essay on Man. They were then printed off, and are now ready for publication. I am sorry for it, because if he could be excused for writing the character of Atossa formerly, there is no excuse for his design of publishing it *after he had received the favour you and I know*, and the character of Atossa is inserted." As the acceptance of the Duchess's money by Pope has been denied, these words of Bolingbroke to Lord Marchmont, who was one of the executors of the rich old dowager's will, put the matter beyond dispute, if any credit is to be placed in human testimony. Bolingbroke speaks on the subject as of a fact well known both to himself and Lord Marchmont. Whether Bolingbroke was also, as has been asserted, really dissatisfied with the terms of Pope's will, and expected that he would have received the legacy which was bequeathed to Warburton, are questions which must be left to the great Searcher of hearts. Pope had undoubtedly acted with characteristic baseness; and soon a breach of faith on his part came to light, even towards Bolingbroke himself.

This further discovery had, however, not fully been made when Bolingbroke thought of again going to Aix-la-Chapelle. With this object he crossed the Channel in June; but, deterred apparently by the alarming aspect of continental affairs, there being nothing but wars, and rumours of wars, he suddenly changed his mind, remained a few days at Calais, and then returned to England. Henceforth he determined finally to reside at Battersea. He sent for all his remaining baggage from Argeville; he made every necessary preparation; and in the autumn of 1744, settled down in the old and decayed mansion in which his father and grandfather had lived and died, and where he was at last to live and die. His spirits were not joyful. He wrote, on coming to this resolution, "I go into my own country as if I went into a strange country, and shall inhabit my own house as if I lodged in an inn."*

Yet, after so long buffeting with the storm, he might have been expected to feel some comfort at reaching his own haven. His days were to end where they had begun. By the old church, which he could not enter without seeing before him the large window emblazoned with all the heraldic glories of the St. Johns, the arms of England in the centre, and the whole supported by portraits of Margaret Beauchamp, Henry VII., and Queen Elizabeth; and in the old house, with the green terrace before it, and looking so pleasantly on the broad and tranquil river, as it flowed down to the great metropolis, here he had at last found his home. Ambition and philosophy, however, had destroyed in his mind those associations which throw a halo over the past, ennoble the present, and brighten the future. The traditions of the past spoke to him in vain; disappointments embittered the passing hours.

* Letter to Lord Marchmont, June 18, 1744.

In the future, of which the old church, where the remains of his family were lying, a mere stepping-stone from his door, was the symbol, he had ceased to believe. He tried to seek comfort in his cold, dreary First Philosophy, and sought it in vain. Even with the virtues of his grandmother, the good and pious Lady Johanna, and of his grandfather, the estimable Sir Walter St. John, he was not very greatly impressed. Of his grandmother all he remembered was her assiduity in making him, as a boy, take some favourite cephalic drops, a few at a time, but often.* Of his grandfather, who had left many philanthropic memorials behind him, not the least being the school he had founded at Battersea for twenty poor boys, of whom Bolingbroke might hear the joyous shouts in the playground, he thought very little. Of his father, the late Lord St. John, he appears to have at last entertained something like aversion, and he refrained even from erecting the slightest monument to his memory.

On first settling at Battersea he found himself engaged in a very unpleasant duty. The breach of faith which Pope committed to the Duchess of Marlborough had scarcely come to light when another, equally injurious to the poet's memory, was discovered towards Bolingbroke himself. Bolingbroke had given to Pope the manuscript of The Patriot King, and the letter on Patriotism, in order to get five or six copies printed for private circulation. Pope, however, had given orders for fifteen hundred additional copies to be worked off, under the strictest injunctions of secrecy. The secret was kept until Pope's death. Soon afterwards Bolingbroke received a letter from the printer, asking him what was to be done with these fifteen hundred copies? Bolingbroke

* See Letter to Lord Marchmont, June 19, 1743.

was astonished to find so much artifice and meanness in his former friend. He requested Lord Marchmont to get all the edition into his hands. "Since," Bolingbroke wrote, "you will take the trouble of receiving from Mr. Wright the edition of that paper which our late friend caused so treacherously to be made; and since I mean to have it only to destroy it, the bringing it hither would be useless. Be so good as to see it burned at your house, to help to dry which is the best use it can be put to."* The edition was, however, not burnt at the house Lord Marchmont was furnishing in London. He thought it more satisfactory to have the sheets destroyed under Bolingbroke's own eyes. They were all taken down to Battersea, and burned on the terrace. Bolingbroke himself set fire to the pile. It is impossible to defend Pope. That he greatly admired The Patriot King, and was afraid so valuable a work would be lost to posterity, unless he took this method of preserving it, as Warburton afterwards alleged, is at best scarcely an excuse. No adequate motive for Pope's conduct has ever been discovered nor imagined. The simplest explanation is the most satisfactory. Stratagem and double-dealing were habitual to him: he could not act straightforwardly, nor understand a straightforward course in others; he frequently lied when lying was quite useless to him, and answered no purpose of deception; and when he could not deceive his enemies, he with a weak kind of cunning appears to have taken a pleasure in outwitting his best friends. Bolingbroke's indignation at the moment was natural and just. It would have been well, however, had it gone no further.

During the autumn of 1744, when he first permanently resided at Battersea, his mind was still all con-

* Bolingbroke to Lord Marchmont, October 22, 1744.

centrated on the politics of the day. His society was sought by many of the younger politicians who had composed the opposition he formerly counselled in vain. It seemed that the time had come when Carteret was to be expelled from office, and when Bolingbroke's favourite scheme of a coalition was at last to be carried out. On this question, as on all the topics of foreign policy, both he and Lady Bolingbroke discoursed with much fluency, relating their experiences of the French ministers, and animating and encouraging their young friends, who listened to them with great interest and curiosity, the husband having actually made the peace of Utrecht, and the wife having really shone in the court of Louis XIV. To them, of course, came Lord Marchmont, proud of Bolingbroke's friendship; the conscientious Lyttelton, Secretary to the Prince of Wales; the accomplished Solicitor-General, Murray, now united with the Pelhams, but always respectful to Tories, and even Jacobites, for whom he was suspected of having a predilection; old Lord Stair, still full of warmth and energy; Chesterfield, the wit and leader of fashion, who had been for some years out of office, but who, on the expected changes at court, was anxious to go to Ireland as Lord-Lieutenant, since Lord Shrewsbury had formerly told him that it was a very dignified post, in which there was just sufficient business to prevent an English nobleman from going to sleep, and not enough to keep him awake.

A greater, too, than either Marchmont, Lyttelton, Murray, Stair, or Chesterfield, at this time occasionally appeared in Bolingbroke's cedar parlour at Battersea. This was William Pitt, just enriched with a legacy of ten thousand pounds from the old Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, who had soon followed her dreaded satirist, Pope, to the tomb. On what terms did these

great orators and statesmen, the two most brilliant politicians of two different generations, meet and converse together? Fortunately we have the means of knowing: for both communicated their impressions of each other, and they were very characteristic. Pitt, always proud, self-conscious, and patriotic, was not so respectful to Bolingbroke as the old statesman expected. Bolingbroke complained to the Lords Chesterfield and Marchmont, that, though Mr. Pitt might be a young man of fine parts, he was supercilious, dogmatical, narrow, passionate, ignorant of the world, and did not listen with such deference to Bolingbroke's opinions as the old Tory leaders, Sir Edward Seymour and Musgrave, were accustomed to show to those he had himself formerly expressed as young Mr. St. John. Pitt, on the other hand, thought Bolingbroke also dogmatical and pedantic, and was surprised to see that, with all his professions of philosophy, he was querulous and fretful, would become vexed with his wife, and storm at his servants.*

In justice, however, to Bolingbroke, it must be added that he was still really fond of his wife, and that if he did sometimes fly into a rage with his servants, he was not an unkind master. One old servant, who was superannuated, and lived at Bath, he used frequently to visit. His household was now principally French. His valet, Francis Arboneau, had been with him for many years. He had another confidential French servant whom he called Picard, but whose real name was Henri Charnet; Marianne Trebon was another; and these, with the wife and son of Francis Arboneau, were all, according to his limited means, well provided for

* Pitt's statement about Bolingbroke was afterwards made to his friend and follower, the future Marquis of Lansdowne, and has been frequently quoted. For Bolingbroke's sentiments respecting Pitt, see Lord Marchmont's Diary, Nov. 6 and 10, 1744.

afterwards in Bolingbroke's will. Assuredly they had no reason to regret the time they spent in his service.

The house at Battersea, to which the young and aspiring politicians were flocking, at the close of 1744, has been nearly all destroyed. On its site was erected a strange building, known to Londoners as the Horizontal Mill; and the Horizontal Mill has since been reduced to a mill of less elevated pretensions. To a stranger, carelessly looking on, it would seem that all traces of the old mansion had vanished. This, however, is not the case. One wing of the old building, outwardly modernized, indeed, appears still to exist; and on entering, the massive wooden staircase may yet speak of the past. Even the identical cedar parlour which Bolingbroke occupied in his old age, there is some reason to believe, partly remains; such it is, at least, indicated by a tradition of the house and neighbourhood, where nearly everything else has undergone so complete a transformation. Upstairs too, above the cedar parlour, there is still an interesting panneled painting; and the finely-carved fruits about the chimneypiece show still some traces of the former splendour.

The remains of the old house, and even the old church and churchyard by its side, on the brink of the river, seem, in this age of steam and railways, and with the outskirts of London extending on every side, to struggle for the ground on which they stand. As with Bolingbroke himself, when he spent these last years at Battersea, a new world is struggling around them, full of life and energy; and in an age with which they have little in common, they seem, as he did at last, very much in the way.

The event which had employed Bolingbroke's thoughts during the autumn, and which he had ear-

nestly endeavoured to bring about, at last came to pass in the November of 1744. Carteret, now Earl of Granville, was obliged to give way to the Pelhams; and the administration called the Broad Bottom was established. Many of the visitors to Battersea entered office; others soon expected to do so; and Bolingbroke, for the first time since the accession of the House of Brunswick, might be considered really on good terms with the government of the day. He condemned the Jacobites who would not support the administration: he had little to do with the opposition which sprung up only to prove its insignificance; and yet he was at heart far from satisfied. He was full of regrets: he could bear neither to look backwards nor forwards; and his letters to Lord Marchmont, were under the semblance of philosophy all in a sad and complaining tone.

In the year 1745 the rebellion broke out. Lord Marchmont, as became the grandson of Sir Patrick Hume, was anxious to do something effective in support of the Protestant dynasty. Bolingbroke advised him to restrain his zeal, and himself characteristically looked on the contest with indifference. He seems to have thought more of a request that had been made to him through Maupertuis, whom he had long known, and was now the President of the Academy at Berlin, to get him two small greyhounds for the King of Prussia, than of either the cause of the young Chevalier or of that of George II. "I expect," he wrote, "no good news, and am therefore contented to have none. I wait with much resignation to know to what lion's paw we are to fall."*

His residence at Battersea had lost the charm

* See the letter to Lord Marchmont, without date, in the Marchmont Papers, ii., 348, and Lord Marchmont's Diary, Sept. 21, 1745.

of novelty. The number of visitors which were at first attracted there by curiosity to see a person so celebrated, soon began to fall off; and Bolingbroke felt that he was neglected even by those successful politicians who had sought his advice, and had at last become part of the administration. He complained of them, just as he had formerly complained of Pulteney and Carteret, and spoke of himself as once more disappointed and deceived. "I did not leave England in '35," he said again to his only confidential correspondent, Marchmont, "till some schemes that were then on the loom, though they never came into effect, made me one too many, even to my intimate friends. I have not left off, since I came to re-settle here, advising and exhorting, till long after you saw it was to no purpose, and smiled at me for persisting. It is time I should retire for good and all from the world, and from the very approaches to business, '*ne peccem*,' I put it into prose, '*ad extremum ridendus*.' If I have showed too much zeal, for I own that this even in a good cause may be pushed into some degree of ridicule, I can show as much indifference; and surely it is time for me to show the latter, since I am come to the even of a tempestuous day, and see in the whole extent of our horizon no signs that to-morrow will be fairer."*

This was his constant cry. Everything was very bad, and he gave up even expecting anything better. That indifference of which he spoke, he was, however, far from feeling: he could neither extinguish nor subdue his interest in public affairs. Still he narrowly watched events and speculated on the aspect of affairs. Still there gnawed at his heart the worm that dieth not. His complaints, too, were in some degree justifiable.

* Letter to Lord Marchmont, July 24, 1746.

The war then raging on the Continent was to this country but a succession of defeats: there appeared to be an utter want of commanding statesmanship; there were many of Walpole's faults, without Walpole's tact and personal ascendancy: though England was really prosperous under the rule of the Pelhams, she certainly did not appear brilliant.

Bolingbroke's life passed on with scarcely any variation. He sent one day into town for Lord Marchmont, though a Presbyterian, to buy him a large Common Prayer Book, such, he directed, as a lord of the manor might hold forth to the edification of the parish. It is interesting to know that he still occasionally attended the services of the old church, and occupied the family pew. In the September of 1746, he went into Oxfordshire on a visit to Lord Cornbury. There he met his friend, William Chetwynd, the solicitor-general Murray, and Pitt, who had at last become Paymaster of the Forces. Bolingbroke spent a few days very pleasantly, and then professing absolute resignation, though still criticising the politics of the day, returned to his own fireside at Battersea, which he declared to be the fittest and only place for him in the winter, where he expected no good and feared no evil. He added:

"C'est icy, que j'attends la mort sans la désirer, ne la craindre."

His life was henceforth more solitary than it had ever previously been. He said that he scarcely knew the language spoken by the younger generation; that henceforth he would plunge himself still more deeply in philosophical retreat; that he would live as if he were dead. He called the home of his fathers his hermitage. There he resided, still occasionally embarrassed in his circumstances, but spending less than he had

ever done before, and having, as he declared, sufficient, because the little that he had he would not want long. He still criticised both foreign and domestic affairs, expressing to Lord Marchmont his dissatisfaction with all men and things. Even with the friends whom he had advised to unite with the Pelhams, and all the members of the Opposition that had been formed against Walpole, he was anything but pleased. The cause of liberty, he said, had been as little regarded by the leaders, who gave it out to their troops, as the cause of St. George or St. Denis was concerned in the battles of the English and the French. He considered that they had made him their instrument, and as soon as their purpose was served, had laid him scornfully aside. "From being a crutch," he wrote, "I am at most a reed in the hand of every one I honour and would serve. Some who leaned upon me, such as I was, in their days of lameness, have laid me by as an useless instrument, since the angel stirred the waters, and they got into the pool and were cured."*

The winter of 1746 was severe. At Battersea the tides were very high. The rain sometimes fell in torrents; at others the snow blocked up the roads; and the weather was always most tempestuous. Fewer visitors than ever drove from London down to Bolingbroke's house. He seemed quite deserted by the great and busy world, and he again complained of being left in complete solitude. But he wrote to Lyttelton a kind letter of condolation on the death of his wife. As the summer of 1747 approached, Bolingbroke's gout became again very painful. He was also troubled with a humour, which had settled in his thigh and knee. Dreading the next winter, and wishing, as almost his sole comfort, to

* See the letters to Lord Marchmont, Nov. 25, 1746, and Feb. 19, 1747.

be free from acute pain, he again repaired to Bath, hoping that the waters would remove his rheumatism, or drive his gout to an extreme part.* At first they afforded him some relief. But he persevered with the pumping until it did his limbs more harm than good; and the drinking of the water had at last no beneficial effect. He moralized on this effect of the Bath waters, and applied the result to his general experience of life. He had always, he said, at first been drawn in by flattering appearances; he had then impetuously gone to the utmost extreme; and the end had been vexation and disappointment.

During the winter of 1747 and throughout 1748 he was frequently a cripple. Ever disliking walking exercise, both he and his wife were now seldom able to drive out. He was frequently on a couch, and even when he could sit up in his chair, he could not always use his hand to write even to his friend Lord Marchmont. His mind, however, was still active. As the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle was about to meet, he speculated on the prospects of the peace. He took the warmest interest in Lord Marchmont's domestic affairs. After condoling with him a little while before on the death of one wife, he wished him joy on marrying another; congratulated him on being appointed First Commissioner of Police in Scotland, and at last on being elected, with the support of the Government, one of the Scottish representative peers. The King had objected to confer any favours on Lord Marchmont, because he was a friend and visitor of Lord Bolingbroke at Battersea, and supposed to be entirely under his influence. Lord Chesterfield, who had returned from Ireland, and had accepted the seals as Secretary of State, warmly defended Marchmont in the

* See the letter to Lyttelton, Aug. 20, 1747: Phillimore's Lyttelton, p. 294.

royal closet. He even went further. He boldly confessed to the King that he frequently visited Bolingbroke, and that he was always glad to talk with him, as he regarded him as a thorough master of foreign affairs. Bolingbroke was not inclined to say as much of Chesterfield. He spoke privately of Chesterfield's abilities as a foreign minister with contempt, and told Marchmont that the Earl once brought to him for his approbation a despatch so poorly composed that he was obliged to write it all over again. Chesterfield, however, in these years certainly paid Bolingbroke more attentions, and really thought more highly of him, than did any other of the prominent statesmen of that time. He held him forth to his son as a finished man, a model at once of eloquence, style, philosophy, and good breeding: "And why," Chesterfield asked, "should not my son be the same?" Bolingbroke himself admitted that Chesterfield remained faithful to him among the faithless. They talked not only on foreign politics, but even on such matters as Whitfield's preaching, though neither of them could fully estimate the effect Wesley and Whitfield would produce. Bolingbroke, too, could not bear contradiction even from Chesterfield. A mere difference of opinion on a philosophical question made him quite angry. When he talked most about the omnipotence of reason his passions always appeared to Chesterfield the strongest.*

After the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, which was signed in the October of 1748, and on which Bolingbroke and Chesterfield had many conversations, Bolingbroke set himself to compute the cost of the late war, and the principles of policy on which it had been waged. The result

* See the Marchmont Papers, ii., 377; Lord Marchmont's Diary, Aug. 30, 1747; and Chesterfield's Works, ii., 220, 357.

of his meditations during the winter of 1748 and the spring of 1749, was Some Reflections on the Present State of the Nation, principally with Regard to her Debts and Taxes. This, the last of the productions of his brilliant pen, was composed, as far as it now appears, in 1749, and was left unfinished. It is written in a calmer tone than any of his other political writings, and had apparently no personal object. Many of the opinions expressed in it he sincerely entertained. We again observe his inextinguishable animosity to the House of Austria; though he is not at all in favour of allowing that power to be destroyed by France. The Quadruple Alliance he censures as dipping England again in continental affairs from which his own treaty had extricated her; and then enters into a consideration of the debts and taxes under which, according to him, the nation was all but undone. The public debt amounted to the immense sum of eighty millions. As he had himself been one of those who called out for the war against Spain, which began ten years before, and which had since involved France and most of the continental powers, he could scarcely be surprised, however much he might regret, the additional burdens it had entailed. From these he considers it imperative that England should be relieved, even though the land-tax had to be kept on at four shillings in the pound. He disapproves of Pelham's celebrated scheme for consolidating the Three per Cents., because it obviously proceeded on the principle of rendering the debt permanent which he was anxious to see paid off. The importance of the commercial interests of England is in this treatise, however, more fully recognized than in any other of Bolingbroke's political works. Trade, he admits, gave us wealth, wealth power, and power had

rendered us at one time more than a match for France. But he still cannot reconcile himself to those whom he stigmatizes as stockjobbers and usurers, nor to the chiefs of the great mercantile corporations, who, born, he says, to be the servants of Government, had become its masters. He cannot bear that they should compete with the country gentlemen. The landowners, he expressly says, are the true owners of the political vessel; the moneyed men are only passengers.

It must be confessed that the farewell view which Bolingbroke takes in these Reflections of the state of that England he was about to leave, is very melancholy. He can see scarcely anything around him but ruin and despair. His opinions in many respects coincide with those which John Brown afterwards brought forward in his Estimate, and which produced so great and so absurd an impression. Bolingbroke does not consider that England was then at all equal to France; that her financial position was superior; or that she was able to wage a vigorous and successful war against her ancient rival. Yet there was a contradiction given to these evil forebodings by the great war administration of that proud, haughty, and pedantic young Mr. Pitt, who, since he became Paymaster of the Forces, scarcely ever came down to Battersea. A strange contrast, indeed, was afforded by these gloomy Reflections on the State of England in 1749, with her condition in 1759, when all the triumphs of the Godolphin administration, and of the Duke of Marlborough, were equalled, if not surpassed. The national debt of eighty millions too, though it might not be what the eight hundred millions have been called in our day, a mere nothing, was assuredly no such dreadful burden, nor at all above the national resources. The growing prosperity of the country,

whatever might be the outward appearances, was increasing far beyond the brilliant dreams of either ministers or poets. The growing importance of the colonies and the great commercial and manufacturing towns counts from this time; events were progressing in America and Asia, which were to result in extending the British dominions far beyond the limits ever imagined by public men in the days of Queen Anne, and the first thirty years of the House of Brunswick; and the British empire, commercially, financially, and politically, was soon to become the wonder of the world. To all these indications, however, as these Reflections show, Bolingbroke's eyes were blind.

As though he had not had enough of controversy and vexation, when he was writing these Reflections he also involved himself in a bitterly personal and angry warfare. He published, under the title of Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism, his essay on that subject, The Patriot King, and his Remarks on the State of Parties at the Accession of George I. When Lyttelton, to whom, as the Prince of Wales' private secretary, these writings, with many compliments, had been addressed, and who possessed the manuscript of The Patriot King in Bolingbroke's own writing, was informed of his intention to publish them, he earnestly requested him not to allow his name at least to appear. Being no longer in opposition, but a Lord of the Treasury, allied with the Pelhams, he did not wish in any manner to share the responsibility of such a publication. "If I might presume to judge for your lordship," Lyttelton wrote to Bolingbroke, "I should think it more eligible for yourself to defer the publication of it to a more proper time. That a very disagreeable use will be made of it, I am sure; and there is a great difference as to the

consequences and effects of it in the world between an imperfect copy of it being stole into print in a magazine and the avowed and authorized publication, which will draw the attention of all mankind." Bolingbroke disregarded his friend's advice, and was not satisfied with merely publishing these essays. He prefixed to them a preface, ascribing, as the reason of publication, Pope's former breach of faith. Copies, it appeared, were really still in existence; and some portion of The Patriot King had lately filled the columns of a magazine. The author had therefore been compelled to publish a corrected version in his own defence. Poor Pope, though never mentioned by name, is spoken of several times as "the man," and made to appear in a very contemptible and odious light. The compliments which Bolingbroke had paid to Lyttelton were of course omitted; and Bolingbroke observed, both to him and Marchmont, that he had the double mortification of concealing the good he had said of one friend, and of revealing the treachery of another.*

David Mallet, a busy Scotchman, who was undersecretary to the Prince of Wales as Lyttelton had been secretary, was appropriately employed to edit this publication. He had the credit of the preface, though a copy of it, in the same writing as most of Bolingbroke's other manuscripts, may still be seen in the library of the British Museum. Mallet was, according to Johnson, the only native of Scotland of whom Scotchmen were not proud. Some of his ballads are really poetical; but his more ambitious poems do not rise above mediocrity; and his prose compositions are not remarkable. His Life of Lord Bacon, however, acquired some celebrity; and to him and Glover, with a bequest of

* See Phillimore's Lyttelton, 429; and the Marchmont Papers, ii., 380.

a thousand pounds, was left by the old dowager the task of writing a biography of the Duke of Marlborough. Glover abandoned both the money and the office to Mallet; and how Mallet performed this duty has been long known. He always spoke of being engaged upon it; he flattered Garrick with the prospect of having, by a dexterous anticipation, a niche in it; and, though this fact is not so well known, he practised the same artifice upon Bolingbroke. Sensible that there were certain circumstances in his connection with Marlborough which it required a friendly pen to represent favourably, next to writing the history of the time himself, Bolingbroke thought that he did well to secure Mallet, whom he always supposed busy on that life of the Duke of Marlborough of which Mallet actually never wrote a line. Mallet's connection with the prince was also a motive for Bolingbroke's intimacy with him; his deistical sentiments were another; and the last, though not the least of their bonds of sympathy, was their cordial hatred of Warburton. The year after Pope's death, we find Bolingbroke writing to Mallet in the following friendly manner: "Since I send to enquire after your health and Mrs. Mallet's, of both which I hope to have a good account, I cannot help mentioning to you what I hear from many different quarters. They say that Warburton talks very indecently of your humble servant, and threatens him with the terrible things he shall throw out in a life he is writing of our poor deceased friend Pope. I value neither the good nor ill will of his pen. But if he has any regard for the man he flattered living, and thinks himself obliged to flatter dead, he ought to let a certain proceeding die away in silence, as I endeavour it should."

Bolingbroke had himself now broken that silence.

He had endeavoured even to cover Pope's memory with obloquy. Warburton rushed to the rescue in a Letter to the Editor of the tracts on Patriotism; but he could only allege a series of ingenious excuses in favour of his departed friend and benefactor. Afterwards A Letter to the Lord Viscount B——ke, occasioned by his Treatment of a Deceased Friend, was also published, of which Warburton had also the credit, though he denied the authorship. Pope was defended from the imputation of cheating merely for the sake of gain; and Bolingbroke reminded of the manner in which Pope had so often sung his praises. With sufficient severity the pamphleteer said to him, "Regard to yourself ought to have prevented you from exposing the man on whose moral character your own will in a great measure depend. For if Mr. Pope has been unjust to your lordship in one respect he may have been so in another; and then what credit are we to give to all the fine things he has said of your lordship?" On Mallet, this anonymous assailant retorted with great spirit, as diligent in licking Pope's feet while living, and was now licking Bolingbroke's; and he concluded by telling Bolingbroke that Pope's name would revive and blossom in the dust, "while yours, had it not been for his genius, friendship, and idolatrous veneration of you, might in a short course of years have died and been forgotten."

Bolingbroke scarcely expected to be addressed in this manner. An answer to Warburton's pamphlet appeared, entitled A Familiar Epistle to the Most Impudent Man Living. This, though professedly written by an admirer of Bolingbroke, and also, like the advertisement to the Essay on Patriotism, ascribed to Mallet, was also really composed at least under the

direction of Bolingbroke himself. The manuscript copy, which has been preserved, is also in the same hand as most of his other writings; and the allusions at the beginning to Bolingbroke living apart as a distinct species in the political society of his time, and of never having broken the terms of friendship with any man who had not previously broken them with him, are really almost word for word in the letters he was about the same period writing to Lord Marchmont.* For the rest there is much abuse of Warburton, and nothing else. He is told to keep in the low sphere to which nature and fortune had confined him, to coax his young wife, to flatter his old uncle, never to attempt to reason, to be less insolent to those who are far above him in every form of life, and not to insult ladies of the first quality, and men of the greatest eminence. He was not, above all things, to presume to measure himself with Lord Bolingbroke. "I know enough of Lord B—— to be persuaded that it is not in your power to disturb the quiet of his life. Men like him may be said to live in a superior sphere, where the buzz and din of such insects can never reach."

The public to whom both Warburton and Bolingbroke appealed, loudly declared against Bolingbroke. On the question there was scarcely a difference of opinion. Pope, it was admitted, had acted wrongly; but he had been nearly five years in his grave when Bolingbroke thus exposed his conduct. To those who remembered the noble beginning and conclusion of the Essay on Man, in which Pope's finest efforts had been to panegyrize Bolingbroke, whose enemies were told that their sons should blush their fathers were his foes, such a proceeding seemed lamentable in the extreme. Boling-

* See the letters to Lord Marchmont of Sept. 14, 1747, and June 7, 1749.

broke had declared by Pope's deathbed that friendship was the only thing worth living for: for years his constant toast after dinner had been, To Friendship and Liberty; and what was now the result? People called to mind the other eminent men, Oxford and Marlborough, who, after being thought Bolingbroke's friends, had found him their most unscrupulous enemy; and they asked if his conduct was not consistent to the last? A roar of obloquy, resembling that which rose against him after his breach with the Pretender, in 1716, resounded throughout the kingdom. Chesterfield told Bolingbroke frankly that he had at last succeeded in uniting against himself, Whigs, Tories, Trimmers, and Jacobites. But towards all his assailants Bolingbroke turned the same scornful and defiant spirit.*

It was deeply to be regretted that, at the close of his life, he should have engaged himself in such an unseemly controversy, from which he could not possibly gain any advantage. Nothing seemed to soften him, not even his own declining health, and the very serious illness of his wife.

For some time Lady Bolingbroke had been more dead than alive. The attacks of slow fever, under which she had suffered for so many years, had entirely exhausted her strength; and during 1749 it appeared certain that she was slowly but inevitably sinking. In December, Bolingbroke had her conveyed up to town, for the more convenient attendance of physicians, though he himself felt conscious that he was bringing her to London to die. During these later years, she is mentioned in his letters, sometimes as the good woman of this house, sometimes as the old woman of this house,

* See Marchmont Papers, ii. 379.

and at others, as our French friend; but always with respect and affection. The prospect of her death, when his own health was in a very critical condition, caused him much grief. "A man who thinks and feels as I do," he said, "can find no satisfaction in the present scene; and I am about to lose one who has been the comfort of my life, in all the melancholy scenes of it, just at the time when the present is most likely to continue, and to grow daily worse." During the months of January and February, 1750, Lady Bolingbroke still lingered, though her death was steadily approaching. Bolingbroke applied to himself what old Victor had once said to him, "Je deviens tous les ans de plus en plus isolé dans ce monde."* As she was dying Bolingbroke flung himself on the bed, asking her with tears to forgive him all his faults and errors.† Her death occurred on the 18th of March; and, as the parish register shows, she was buried in the church at Battersea on the 22nd.

Bolingbroke, now almost quite solitary, was not reconciled to his wife's death, when he found himself obliged to undertake a very disagreeable duty. Some of her relatives in France disputed her second marriage, and made a legal claim to her property in France. Sinking himself under the attacks of disease, Bolingbroke found himself compelled, in the law courts of Paris, to defend both his honour, and the second Lady Bolingbroke's memory. His old friend, the Marquis of Matignon, who had aided him in the courtship to the Marchioness of Villette, and who had, during his residence in France, lent him large sums of money without interest, exerted himself zealously in Bolingbroke's favour. The proofs of the marriage were, however, not easily procured. A

* Letter to Lord Marchmont, March 1, 1750. † Walpole to Mann, April 2, 1750.

decree of the Chambre de Enquêtes was given against Bolingbroke; and, under that decree, M. de Montmorin, as the Marchioness of Villette's heir-at-law, himself collected the rentes of the late Lady Bolingbroke, as they became due, and applied them to his own use. An appeal was made to the Great Chamber of the Parliament of Paris. Law, however, is proverbially tedious; and Bolingbroke himself had followed his second wife to the tomb before the issue was finally determined.

Whilst tortured by gout and rheumatism, and frequently deprived of the use of his right hand, his temper was not improved by the vexations he suffered from the ungrateful conduct of his late wife's relations, to whom he had really been kind. Another disease had also now established itself in his frame, more dreadful in its ravages than either the gout or rheumatism, from which he had so long suffered. In his unfinished Reflections on the State of a Nation, he had spoken of a cancerous humour preying upon the vitals of the constitution. This, which was a simile as applied to England, suffering under the burdens of the fundholders, became, so far as he was himself personally concerned, a literal fact. A humour in his jaw turned out to be cancerous; and this dreadful affection was found to be not merely local, but to pervade his whole frame.

He could still congratulate Lord Marchmont on the birth of a son and heir; and, during intervals from pain, interested himself in the politics of the day. He could also still look forward to the time when Prince Frederick should become king, and had not abandoned hopes that the earldom, which Oxford had declined to grant him, might still be bestowed upon him by the Prince of Wales, when he should succeed to the British

crown. His sister-in-law, the Lady St. John, was one of Prince Frederick's favourites. Bolingbroke had her son, the young Lord St. John, brought to Battersea, in order, if we believe Horace Walpole, to please the Prince, though surely it was only natural that he should take some interest in his nephew and heir. He refused, even at the Prince's request, to drink coffee in his presence, starting up when Lord Egmont offered him a cup, and exclaiming, like a true courtier, "Good God! my lord, what are you doing? Do you consider who is here?" A belief that Bolingbroke directed all the measures of Prince Frederick's little court generally prevailed.*

It was decreed, however, that Prince Frederick was never to inherit the crown, nor Bolingbroke to receive from him the patent of earldom. The old statesman felt himself getting more and more enfeebled, as the months of the year 1750 passed away. His impatience for the result of his litigation before the French tribunals increased. But he harassed himself in vain. In November he made his will. He professed, in the spirit of his philosophy, a cheerful resignation to the order of Providence, and then regretted that, after thirty years of proscription and the immense losses he had sustained, "by unexpected events in the course of it, by the injustice and treachery of persons nearest to me, by the negligence of friends, and by the infidelity of servants," that his fortune was so reduced, as to render him unable to make such a disposition, and to give such ample legacies, as he had always intended. William Chetwynd, of Stafford, and Joseph Taylor, of the Inner Temple, were made executors of this will, and to them

* See Smollett's History of England; Horace Walpole's Memoirs of the Reign of George II.; and the Works of Dr. William King.

each he left two hundred guineas, to buy some memorial of their friend. The diamond ring which he wore upon his finger he bequeathed to the Marquis of Matignon, and after him to his son, the Count de Gace. Lady Bolingbroke, in dying, had left to the Marquis a similar testimony of her regard. Four hundred pounds were to be laid out in the public securities for his valet, Francis Arboneau and his wife, and after them to their son. To his servants, Marianne Trebon and Henri Charni, he gave a hundred pounds each; and all the others who should have lived with him two years or more at the time of his death were to receive an additional year's wages. To David Mallet, he left, as far as they were at his own disposal by law, all the printed and published works of which he was the author; the Letters on History, which had been privately printed, but not published; all his manuscript works, papers, and writings; and all the books which, at the time of his decease, should be found in his library. No mention was made in the will of any member of the St. John family. The residue of his personal estate, which, after the legacies had been paid, appears to have been very small, was bequeathed to his two executors. The will was dated the twenty-second day of November.

Though Bolingbroke had made his will, he had no idea, during most of the year 1751, that his end was so near. The unexpected death of Prince Frederick in March, was the last of Bolingbroke's political disappointments. His great comfort was, until the summer, that his pain was not acute. The malady, however, began daily to make more rapid progress. Dissatisfied with the remedies prescribed by his regular medical attendants, he, with all his old impetuosity, put himself under the direction of a popular empiric, who under-

1751.

took to remove the humour in the jaw. As the cancer was, however, not local but universal, there was really no hope of a cure. Bolingbroke was, however, confident that he would soon be well. He told Chesterfield, at the beginning of December, not to come to him until he was quite recovered, as he expected to be in ten days or a fortnight. The very next day he was seized with the most violent pains. The treatment of his new medical attendant of course made him worse. He had now no relief from the most dreadful agony. He began to be convinced himself that his death was near. Chesterfield paid him a farewell visit. "God," said Bolingbroke, "who placed me here, will do what He pleases with me hereafter; and He knows best what to do. May He bless you!" Now and then he fell into fits of passion and rage. He refused the ministrations of the clergyman of his parish. The violent pains never left him until two days before his death. He then sunk into a state of insensibility, from which he never recovered.* According to the evidence of his own monument in the church, he died on the 12th of December, 1751. This date is confirmed by other testimony; and, though it has been disputed, there seems no good reason whatever for setting it aside. He was privately buried in the vault, with his late wife, as he had himself directed, on the 18th of December.†

The family vault is directly under the communion

* See Chesterfield's Works, ii., 451, iii., 432, and iv., 1; Spence's Anecdotes, 369; and Walpole to Mann, Dec. 12, 1751.

† This date I give on the evidence of the parish register, which, on all the disputed points respecting Bolingbroke's life, I have carefully examined. It is surprising to see in the second edition of so meritorious a book as the Life of Pope by Mr. Carruthers, such erroneous statements respecting Bolingbroke, as that he died on the 15th of November, and that The Patriot King and the Essay on the State of Parties in 1714 were addressed to Lord Cornbury.

and altarpiece; and above them is the fine old painted window, on which the heraldic glories of the St. Johns are so prominently displayed. There sleeps Henry St. John Viscount Bolingbroke, after all the vicissitudes of his ambitious and stormy career. In the gallery to the right of the communion table, a monument rivalling that of the Lord Grandison and his wife, near which it is placed, was erected to Lord and Lady Bolingbroke, also with busts of them both in white marble. The epitaphs were composed by Bolingbroke himself; and his own, in which he speaks of his long and severe persecution, for being devoted to Queen Anne while she lived, and of being, in the latter portion of his life, the enemy of no national party and the friend of no faction, still exists in his own handwriting. Such was the estimate he wished to be accepted of himself. So let it be.

The two medallion busts of Lord and Lady Bolingbroke are extremely interesting memorials. Lady Bolingbroke's features are regular and pleasing. We see that she is a Frenchwoman; but that even in old age, and with the signs of ill health plainly marked, she has still something of Parisian grace, and the style of the Faubourg St. Germain. Bolingbroke's bust is very characteristic of him as he was during the last years he spent at Battersea. The hair, quite white, is drawn away from the brow, and falls straight down the back of the head. The forehead is retreating but high, the junction of the brow and face strongly marked, the expression piercing and eager, the nose long and prominent, and the lines about the mouth somewhat harsh and severe. It is undoubtedly the face of a man of great intellectual endowments; but it possesses not much of the placid serenity of old age: it is scarcely the portrait of one at ease with himself or with the world.

Bolingbroke had been dead but a few weeks when his lawsuit was decided at Paris. Early in March, the judgment of the Great Chamber of the Parliament of Paris reversed the decision of the Chambre des Enquêtes. The marriage between Bolingbroke and his second wife was proved, and M. Montmorin was obliged to restore the money he had seized under the former verdict. The President even went out of his way to declare his great admiration for the late Lord Bolingbroke, and the pleasure it gave him and the court to be the means of doing justice to the memory of himself and his wife. All Paris was excited, and rejoiced at the result. "The cause," wrote one of Mallet's friends, "was finally determined yesterday in the Parliament of Paris, and the sentence of the judges more favourable than our most sanguine hopes expected. The former sentence of the Chambre des Enquêtes is totally annulled, and Montmorin is condemned to refund the money that he seized in consequence of it, and to pay, in the style of the law of England, the whole costs of the suit. Such a determination does honour to the Grande Chambre, and must have given infinite joy to his lordship, if he had been alive to have enjoyed the triumph. The Marquis of Matignon has done wonders for his friend, and I believe few such characters are to be met with in the records of ancient or modern times." *

At his death, Bolingbroke, in this marquis, had, therefore, at least left one faithful friend. It was nearly all, with the few legacies, that he had to leave. The three sons of his father by his second wife died

* This letter is in the Sloane MSS. 4948, A. 436. Immediately preceding it there is also a letter in French from the Marquis of Matignon on the same subject. It is equally satisfactory and explicit.

before Bolingbroke. George, the eldest, as has been before stated, expired at Venice in January 1716. Holles, the youngest, who had been equerry to Queen Caroline, died unmarried in 1738, and was buried in the vault at Battersea, where there is a marble tablet erected to his memory. Lord St. John's second son, John, for some time represented Wootton Bassett, and was made Comptroller of the Customs in the port of London at a salary of £1200 a year. This appointment, though it was purchased, as well as that held by young Holles St. John, proves clearly that old Lord St. John and his sons by his second marriage were on good terms with the court and the Walpole administration, during the period when Bolingbroke was one of the most obnoxious opponents of the Government, and of George II. John St. John, the second son, succeeded his father as Lord St. John. He also married twice, left a numerous family, and died in 1748. His body was brought over to England and buried with great pomp in the church at Battersea. His eldest son, Frederick, then became Viscount St. John; and, on Bolingbroke's death, also succeeded to his honours as Viscount Bolingbroke and Baron St. John of Lydiard Tregoze. The second Viscount Bolingbroke became one of George III.'s steady adherents, and for many years was a Lord of the Bedchamber. His matrimonial relations were less fortunate than those of his illustrious uncle. He married, in 1757, the Lady Diana Spencer, eldest daughter of the second Duke of Marlborough. From her, however, he was divorced in 1768, and she was afterwards married to the Hon. Topham Beauclerk, with whom she had forgotten her duty to her first husband. She was the "Lady Di," who is so fre-

quently mentioned in Boswell's Life of Johnson, whom the doctor himself once branded with the most opprobrious epithet that can be applied to a woman, but with whom, however, he for years continued on very complimentary and friendly terms. With the second Lord Bolingbroke the doctor once happened to meet at Brighton after his union with Lady Diana had been dissolved; and Johnson, not knowing at the time whom he was addressing, delivered to him a long harangue on divorces, which was supposed to be more eloquent than agreeable to his hearer.

The St. Johns ceased to live at Battersea. The church was rebuilt, and the old family left the suburban village where their immediate ancestors resided, where the market gardens in the neighbourhood were well cultivated, where the asparagus was famous, but where every year the advancing boundary of the great metropolis steadily encroached. The school, however, which Sir Walter St. John founded in 1700, for twenty poor boys of Battersea, has been enlarged, and still flourishes, and deserves to flourish. This philanthropic institution, as bread cast upon the waters, visibly appears after many days. It promises to outlast the splendid window in the old church, and the marble monuments of the Lords Grandison and Bolingbroke; and in a few generations it may be the only vestige of the St. Johns in Battersea. The school was rebuilt in 1859, and over the gateway there was again admirably carved the arms of Sir Walter St. John, surmounted by the eagle, above the helmet; with the device on the shield of the bloody hand; and the motto underneath—

Rather Deathe
than
False of
Faythe.

In Walter St. John's portrait, which belongs to the foundation, and, it is to be hoped, will be preserved to it,* we can trace a decided family likeness to the representations yet remaining of Lord Bolingbroke. The features, however, are less strongly marked, and the general expression is more pleasing. If not the picture of a great genius, it is that of a happy and good man; as Sir Walter St. John's life was certainly happier, and perhaps more enviable than that of his brilliant grandson.

Bolingbroke went down to his grave believing that both his political and philosophical reputation would yet burst forth in full brilliancy. Great things were expected from his posthumous writings. They were the talk of all literary circles. Even his most intimate friends, to whom some of these works had been shown, looked for their appearance with impatience. As soon as Lord Cornbury, then Lord Hyde, knew that Bolingbroke had left his writings to Mallet, this amiable nobleman wrote to him from Paris, respecting the manner in which they were to be given to the world. He was particularly anxious about the Letters on History, which were addressed to himself, and earnestly besought Mallet to suppress the dissertation on the authenticity of Jewish History. "Lord Bolingbroke's own mind embraced all objects," Lord Cornbury observed in his letter to Mallet, "and looked far into all, but not without a strong mixture of passions, which will always necessarily beget some prejudices and follow more. And on the subject of religion particularly (whatever was the motive that inflamed his passion upon that subject chiefly) his passions were there most strong; and I

* It is now in the dining-room of the master of the college, hanging over the fireplace.

will venture to say, (when called upon, as I think, to say it,) what I have said more than once to himself, with the deference due to his age and extraordinary talents, his passions upon that subject, prevented his otherwise superior reason from seeing that even in a political light only, he hurt himself, and wounded society, by striking at establishments upon which the conduct at least of society depends." Lord Cornbury said much more. His letters, however, had no effect upon Mallet. He replied, that the book was printed off; and that he had Lord Bolingbroke's repeated commands to publish his works exactly as they were left in the revised copies.*

Few things that Mallet did entitle him to respect. If he resisted Lord Cornbury's importunities, it is reasonable to suppose that he saw his own advantage in persevering with his original intention. He was afterwards loudly blamed by all Lord Bolingbroke's intimate friends, and particularly by the Lords Cornbury and Marchmont, for giving these anti-religious writings uncurtailed to the world. It was said that Lord Bolingbroke had himself promised one of his relatives that his attacks on Christianity should not appear, and that he had himself even drawn his pen through the dissertation on Jewish History. On Mallet, the agent, they endeavoured to cast the blame, which the public thought belonged to Lord Bolingbroke himself as the author. But there can be no doubt that Mallet did fulfil the commission intrusted to him by Lord Bolingbroke as he had been directed. The complaints which Lord Marchmont and Lord Cornbury made against him were therefore most unjust. It is true that in

* The letters of Mallet and Lord Cornbury on this subject have been several times printed. See also Sloane MSS. 4254.

Bolingbroke's will there were no express injunctions to publish his writings as they were left; but neither was there anything to the contrary; and had he desired these works to have been suppressed or altered, he could easily have carried this intention into effect. But the very selection of Mallet as editor, instead of Lord Marchmont or Lord Cornbury, appears to show that Bolingbroke foresaw the scruples these two friends would entertain on the subject; and that he left them to Mallet, who was himself an avowed deist, because he knew that Mallet would publish them as they remained. When Mallet was blamed for publishing the dissertation on Jewish History, it was forgotten that Warburton had objected to that very portion of the Letters on History; that his criticism had been transmitted to Bolingbroke by Pope; that Bolingbroke was highly indignant at Warburton's presumption;* and that he drew up an answer to it, which was also carefully left, correctly copied out, and revised, among his manuscript papers.† Bolingbroke regarded this portion of his work as the corner-stone of his system. We have seen him engaged on these chronological investigations ever since the year 1720: this was a question, on which if he had not thought deeply, he had at all events read much, and felt very strongly.

Besides, what is the short dissertation on Jewish History in the Letters on History, in comparison with the whole series of the philosophical writings addressed to Pope? Were they to be destroyed? Can any one who has noticed Bolingbroke labouring on those subjects for so many years, and who observes the careful manner in which these manuscripts were left, affirm that they were not really intended by the author for publication? Yet

* See ante, p. 657. † See this answer in Sloane MSS. 4948 A, p. 455.

Bolingbroke only repeats in the Letters on History what he had said in much more detail, and with still greater emphasis, in the Philosophical Essays. It would have been useless to destroy the one without destroying the others. Surely some degree of honesty was due to the public. Without these writings no correct idea could ever have been formed of Bolingbroke as he actually was. Whatever may have been Mallet's other delinquencies, by refusing to curtail these writings he gave the world the opportunity of judging fairly of Bolingbroke as he really appeared in his later years; and for doing so, although it might not please the Lords Cornbury and Marchmont to have their great friend known by the public as the passionate proselytizing deist they themselves knew him to have been, Mallet must, by all impartial persons, who believe that truth has something to do with literature and philosophy, be considered in this respect, if in no other, to deserve praise rather than censure.

Almost immediately after Bolingbroke's death, a volume containing his Reflections on Exile and the Letters on History was published in Paris from a copy in the possession of the Marquis of Matignon. In the preface there was an account of the lawsuit which had just terminated so satisfactorily. Some time afterwards another work was published with the French on one page and the English on the opposite, entitled Reflections concerning Innate Moral Principles. In the advertisement it was stated that this little philosophical treatise had been written in French by the late Lord Bolingbroke for a club in Paris, and that the manuscript was in some respects imperfect. The work appeared in a somewhat suspicious manner; but on examination it will afford ample evidence of being Bolingbroke's com-

position. The club for which it was written was the celebrated Société d'Entresol, which met in the lodgings of the Abbé Alari, in the upper portion of the hotel of the President Henault in the Place Vendôme. This club was founded in imitation of the English associations of a similar nature. It met on the Saturday evening of every week; there were coffee and tea prepared for the members; and literature and politics, especially foreign affairs, became the topics of discussion. M. de Torcy sometimes appeared in the Entresol. The other members were all of some distinction in the French society of that day. Bolingbroke, however, though his name has been mentioned as one of the members of the club, and though, in one of his letters to the Abbé Alari, he alludes to it jokingly as a rival to the French Academy, of which the Abbé had been elected a member,* could not have been a very frequent visitor. He was only occasionally in Paris during the year 1724, when, if the statements of the historians of the club are to be more trusted than the evidently very inaccurate dates affixed to some portion of Bolingbroke's correspondence with the Abbé Alari, it was first established.† He returned to England in 1725; and did not see France again until four years after the Société d'Entresol had ceased to exist. The political discussions which were carried on by the members at last excited the apprehensions of the French government. The club was dissolved by Cardinal Fleury in 1731.

The Reflections on Innate Moral Principles form but a slight treatise. Bolingbroke discusses with eloquence one of those questions on which ingenious men love to

* See the Letter to the Abbé Alari (wrongly dated) Oct. 6, 1723.

† See the Lettres de Lord Vicomte Bolingbroke, iii., 458.

display their ingenuity. Of course, according to his philosophy, there can be no innate moral principle. He argues that all compassion for the distressed, and even the affection of parents for their children, proceed from the love of self, which he affirms to be the only great motive principle of human nature, implanted by Providence in the breasts of all men. This he maintains to be a kind of instinct, though, as generally happens when the word instinct is mentioned in philosophical works, as to what it really is, and how far it is to be distinguished from an innate moral principle, he is not very clear. Paternal affection he denies to be an innate principle, instancing, as against any such conclusion, the Greeks and Romans leaving their children to perish in forests and on the mountains, and the Peruvians, on the authority of Garcilasso de la Vega, who fattened their children and ate them, and when their women had given over child-bearing, fattened and ate them too. Education and custom determine everything, and form the character of all men and all nations. One man butchers his foe through self-love; another tenderly rears his son through self-love. The same principle of action which impels the highly-cultivated European to relieve the distresses of his fellow-creatures impels the American savage to kill and eat his son. Such are the conclusions to which Bolingbroke comes in this little treatise on innate morality. They are at least consistent with the general tenor of his philosophy.

The publication of the French edition of the Reflections on Exile and the Letters on History, as with the subsequent Reflections on Innate Moral Principles, excited little attention in England. Mallet, however, gave to the public, in 1753, an instalment of

Bolingbroke's posthumous works, by publishing, in one volume, the Letter to Sir William Windham, the unfinished Reflections on the State of the Nation, and the Introductory Letter to Pope on the Philosophical Essays. They were bought eagerly, and prepared the reading world for the great body of Bolingbroke's works, which appeared on the day Henry Pelham died, the 6th of March, 1754.

Mallet found himself immediately involved in litigation with Francklin, the proprietor of the Craftsman. In this new edition of Bolingbroke's writings, Mallet had printed as a matter of course, and as though his right to them, as to the rest of Bolingbroke's works, was quite indisputable, the Remarks on English History, the Dissertation on Parties, and other contributions which had appeared in the celebrated organ of the Opposition. Francklin, however, claimed these political works as his own property. They had appeared in his periodical: he had undergone prosecutions on account of some of them: he had run the risk of more: he had published them in volumes during Lord Bolingbroke's life, and had never been called upon by him for any account. He asserted that Bolingbroke allowed him to enjoy the profits of these works, as some recompense for the trouble and danger he had undergone during their first publication. On referring even to the terms of the will in which Bolingbroke had bequeathed his writings to Mallet, these contributions of the Craftsman were only left to him, as far as they could be by law: an expression which seemed to intimate a conviction that Francklin had a claim upon them as his own literary property. Arbitrators were chosen by both Francklin and Mallet. They had several meetings, and came to an arrangement which seemed equitable. Mallet appeared at first satisfied with the

decision. But he acted on this occasion as on nearly all others during his life. He sent a lawyer's letter refusing to accept the award which had been partly settled by his own arbitrator.*

He expected to make immense profits from the publication of the works; but he found himself disappointed. The posthumous philosophical publications which ranked Bolingbroke amongst the most determined assailants of Christianity, were at first received with surprise, and afterwards read with detestation. While Bolingbroke lived he had only been known to the outward world as a statesman and political writer. Even then, for nearly forty years he had been most unpopular; and he had been regarded as the enemy of the system of government established by the Revolution. Few even of his most inveterate enemies were, however, prepared for the recklessness of his philosophical revelations. After being long considered as the opponent of English liberty, he appeared now as the foe of all revealed religion, of all established institutions, and of all society. He seemed to have taken a cynical kind of pride in shocking every prejudice which is most deeply rooted in the hearts of Englishmen, and especially of that party which professed to support the Church of England, and of which he had once been the most brilliant champion. All Lord Cornbury's anticipations were more than fulfilled. Men who were inclined to look with some degree of toleration and even of sympathy on the errors of Bolingbroke's political life, only reprobated the more strongly his philosophical heresies. The divines of all ranks and denominations appeared in the front rank of his assailants, and of these, of course, Warburton was the ablest and the foremost. From the

* See a printed statement of the case in Sloane MSS. 4948, A. 450.

pulpit, and through the press, Bolingbroke's name was never mentioned but with obloquy. Even the clergyman whom he had some years before presented with the living at Battersea distinguished himself as one of the assailants of his noble patron's philosophical works. In a very ingenious ironical imitation of Bolingbroke's style and manner of declaiming, young Edmund Burke showed that the attack on what was called artificial theology might be turned against all established governments. The Jacobites had long before given Bolingbroke up; the moderate Tories now abandoned him; and, in truth, from this period the assailants of his life and works have been most frequent and determined among the more conservative section of English politicians than even among his old enemies the Whigs.

It is not the object of this work to revive in any manner that clamour which so fiercely assailed Bolingbroke's memory. It has been endeavoured in these pages to give a just delineation of his life as it really was. Even from drawing any general conclusion of my own, I deliberately refrain. The facts must speak for themselves: and of these every reader may be the judge. Whatever may be the verdict, and whatever may be the fate of those writings, both political and philosophical, which Bolingbroke estimated so highly, and which certainly, as magnificent declamations, have scarcely ever been surpassed, there is little doubt that his name will always be remembered as that of one of the most brilliant and accomplished statesmen who ever sought to govern England. And his life will not be without a memorable moral, full of warning to the most brilliant and ambitious, if it show that even great intellectual endowments, high rank, and the finest opportunities, are not in themselves sufficient to con-

stitute an enduring political success; but that all these qualifications, without some earnest and steadfast faith in a great cause as the representative of a great principle, without something which can be said to take a man out of his narrow individual selfishness, and make him zealously uphold what he believes to be the best interests of his country and of mankind, cannot always avert mortification and defeat from their possessor, nor secure the lasting respect and approbation of the world.

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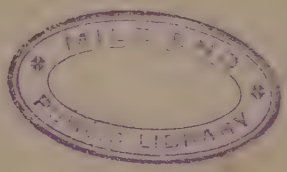

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